



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

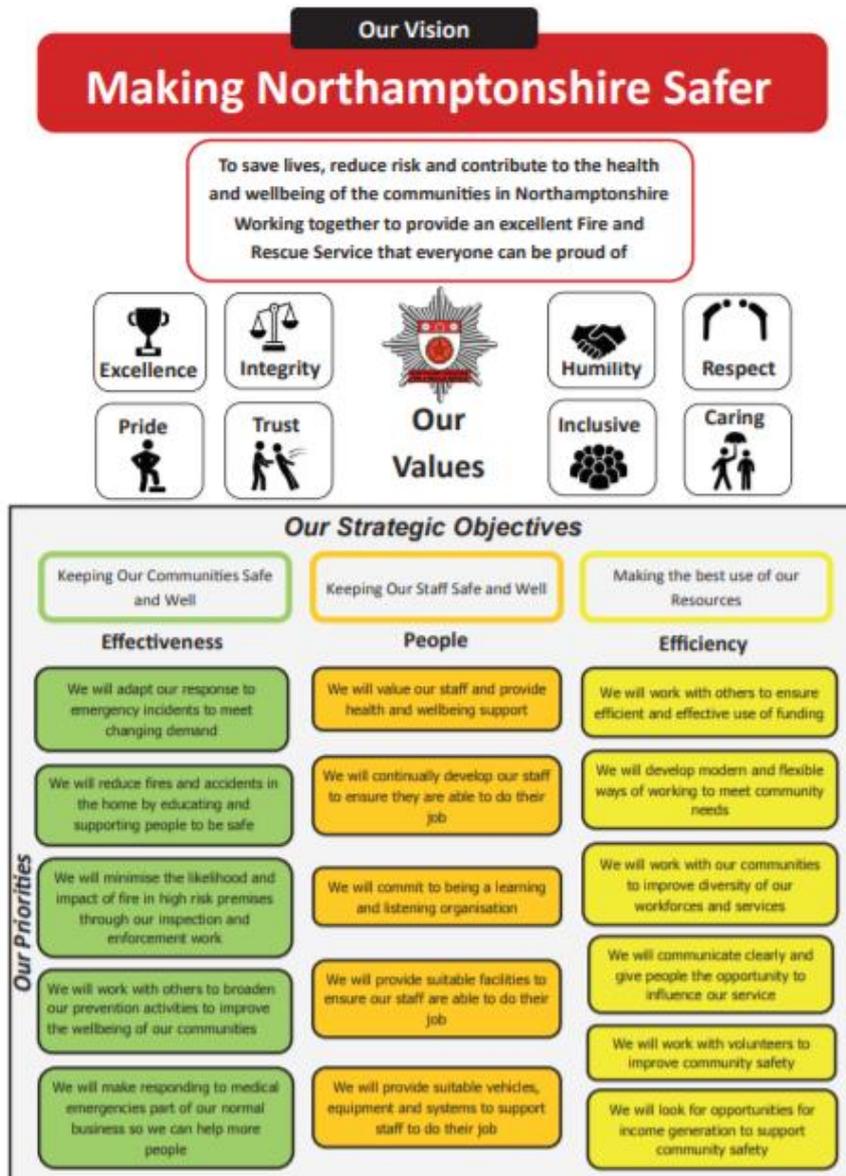
16th December 2021

Office of The Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire & Rescue Plan Update

1. Introduction

1.1 This report updates the Panel on the work of the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commission and the progress being made in relation to the delivery of the Fire and Rescue Plan for Northamptonshire.

2. Delivering the Fire and Rescue Plan



Our Vision

Making Northamptonshire Safer

To save lives, reduce risk and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the communities in Northamptonshire
Working together to provide an excellent Fire and Rescue Service that everyone can be proud of



Excellence



Integrity



Our
Values



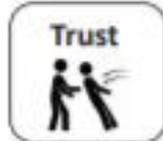
Humility



Respect



Pride



Trust



Inclusive



Caring

Our Strategic Objectives

Keeping Our Communities Safe and Well

Effectiveness

We will adapt our response to emergency incidents to meet changing demand

We will reduce fires and accidents in the home by educating and supporting people to be safe

We will minimise the likelihood and impact of fire in high risk premises through our inspection and enforcement work

We will work with others to broaden our prevention activities to improve the wellbeing of our communities

We will make responding to medical emergencies part of our normal business so we can help more people

Keeping Our Staff Safe and Well

People

We will value our staff and provide health and wellbeing support

We will continually develop our staff to ensure they are able to do their job

We will commit to being a learning and listening organisation

We will provide suitable facilities to ensure our staff are able to do their job

We will provide suitable vehicles, equipment and systems to support staff to do their job

Making the best use of our Resources

Efficiency

We will work with others to ensure efficient and effective use of funding

We will develop modern and flexible ways of working to meet community needs

We will work with our communities to improve diversity of our workforces and services

We will communicate clearly and give people the opportunity to influence our service

We will work with volunteers to improve community safety

We will look for opportunities for income generation to support community safety

Our Priorities

2.1 Work Delivered by NFRS

2.2 Draft Community Risk Management Plan and Risk Analysis Document

With the current Integrated Risk Management plan due to end in March 2022, NFRS have conducted a full risk analysis of the services progress and have drafted a new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which is supported by a Risk Analysis Document. The CRMP has been written with the NFCC Community Risk Programme in mind, which is providing Fire Services with updated guidance on best practice around risk planning. The CRMP is due to be published in April 2022, after a public consultation, and will cover a three-year period up to 2025. The Plan will be the service's response to Police, Fire and Crime Plan and will also be supported by the Chief Fire Officers Vision 25 document.

2.3 Service Performance

During 2021 the service has reviewed how performance is monitored. Overall incident numbers continue the long term and national downward trend, albeit increasing slightly on last year's figures due to the road to Covid recovery. Availability and Standards of Response remain on a sound trajectory. Prevention and Protection audits and activities are increasing in line with our roadmap to recovery. Monthly performance review meetings are now held with heads of Prevention, Protection and Response which enables greater analysis of data and opportunity to react to any trends, increases or decreases in incident data. This has resulted in early intervention across Prevention, Protection and Response. One area of note is Water Safety. The data showed an increase in the Service attending water rescue incidents. As a result, the service linked with RNLI to provide a presentation to the County Water Safety Forum on water safety, crews from Daventry took part in 'Op Unite' to increase public safety. This also led to additional funding for 5 fixed throwlines water rescue boards and a further 5 which was funded by the OPFCC Fire grant.

The co-location to Darby House has supported closer collaboration working across the performance teams. This has included the recent purchase of a joint demographic system, Acorn, which will provide both services with a rich source of demographic data which will support targeting vulnerable members of the community. Performance Data highlighted a spike in deliberate fires (in particular secondary) during April/May and summertime. This is true of previous years as well as the current year. As these spikes correlate to school holidays further mapping using tools on Resilience Direct has taken place to provide more insight into those NFRS and Police recorded incidents where young people were seen in the vicinity or running away. This highlighted some localised clusters which have led to further exploration and partnership working. Notably intensive partnership work at Wilsons Farm Track Northampton, Void premises in Desborough and a request for partnership problem solving via CSP Community One meetings for the Kettering area which is seeing an increased spike.

Police and Fire have now produced a new joint Arson Reduction Strategy, which is supported by a joint delivery plan and actively monitored. New actions include the development of the Qlik app to produce useful data regarding police and NFRS recorded incidents but also to look at the potential to overlay with relevant anti-social behaviour and criminal damage incidents to improve analysis and problem solving. A new piece of work to identify empty buildings that are high risk has also started in anticipation of more void premises in a post Covid economy and taking the learning from recent incidents involving void buildings. The Service is also preparing for a HMICFRS Inspection which is due to commence in December 2021 and run through January 2021.

- 2.4 **HMO pilot scheme** - Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is launching a pilot scheme to build the skills and capacity of fire crews in carrying out inspection visits at homes in multiple occupation (HMOs). HMOs are buildings that are occupied by at least three unrelated people in rented out rooms and this scheme will see firefighters in Wellingborough, Kettering and Daventry carrying out compliance checks in 30 HMOs across those three towns. The checks carried out during the pilot will be at HMOs that have been visited before and found to be well run and compliant with safety regulations. The fire service has regulatory powers that apply only to the common and shared areas of HMOs such as kitchens. During the checks, the crews will be supported by fully warranted, specialist Fire Protection Officers. The aim of the pilot scheme is to extend the skills of Northamptonshire firefighters in protection, increasing the capacity and skills in this type of work and freeing up Fire Protection Officers to carry out more complex work in sectors of higher risk. I am very pleased to see Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service continuing to extend the ways they work to keep the community safe.
- 2.5 **Hundreds of new students receive fire safety advice** - As a new wave of students head to university for the first time, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service have been visiting the county's new residents as they settle into their halls of residence accommodation. Over four evenings in October, Prevention and Protection Officers from NFRS met with students living in halls to discuss fire safety and offer advice to help reduce the likelihood of fires starting in these premises. These 'kitchen fire talks' were incredibly well received by the students with 858 attending one of the four sessions. For many students this might be the first time they will be cooking for themselves and with all the distractions that go alongside student life, it is important they know how to be safe in the kitchen.
- 2.6 **'Have A Go' Recruitment Days** - Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service have been holding 'Have A Go' days as part of their campaign to hire 12 new trainee firefighters. The 'Have A Go' days allow people to come along and consider whether a career in the Fire Service could be for them, with the events giving members of the public the chance to ask questions of serving firefighters and have a go at some of the entry level tests themselves. Becoming a firefighter is not just about tackling a blaze, it can entail attending a range of incidents such as road traffic collisions and rescues, as well as working in the community to protect people and prevent

incidents from occurring. The 'Have A Go' days took place at fire stations at Rushden, Corby, Moulton and Mereway and marked the start of our recruitment campaign.

- 2.7 **The country's first accredited fire service wellbeing dog** - Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has welcomed a four-legged recruit to service to help with the mental wellbeing of its staff. Olive, the three-year-old cocker spaniel has become the country's first Oscar Kilo 9 accredited, fire service wellbeing and trauma support dog, having successfully completed the suitability assessment. This appointment coincided with World Mental Health Day on 10th October. Firefighters and staff often face challenging and traumatic situations, but no fire service in the UK has yet employed an Oscar Kilo 9 accredited wellbeing dog, until now. Olive, wearing her official 'OK 9' wellbeing jacket, takes up her new position within Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's Wellbeing Team, who already offer a range of services and support to colleagues. Olive can now be called upon to spend time with colleagues who are feeling despondent, have attended a difficult job, or are suffering from stress or trauma. Dogs are renowned for increasing oxytocin and serotonin levels in humans and can contribute to lowering blood pressure. They are perceptive to different emotions in humans and have an innate ability to recognise anxiety and stress. While some police forces already have wellbeing dogs, Olive is a first for the fire service nationally. It's important that we encourage our staff to talk more openly about mental health, especially those who are operational and attend sometimes harrowing incidents. Olive will help to create a calm environment where people will feel more relaxed and able to talk freely, so we can effectively support individuals as needed.
- 2.8 **COVID recovery.** As we come out of the worst of the pandemic NFRS have increased their public facing activity which has seen a 4-fold increase in activity like Home Fire Safety Visits being delivered, school visits restarting, Fire Safety Inspections increasing as well as attendance at high profile community events such as Northampton PRIDE and Diwali. In addition, NFRS staff continue to assist EMAS with the driving of urgent care ambulances and are still playing a full part in the Multi agency effort as we go through the Winter Months with the Chief Fire officer chairing the County's multi agency co-ordination group.
- 2.11 **Enabling Services.** All 5 areas (finance, IT, HR, fleet and estates) are now in the process of embedding new structures and processes to support both organisations. Benefits of bringing together the 5 business functions are starting to be realised, an example being over £1m of avoided costs within IT that would not have been realised without the departments coming together.

3. Holding the Chief Fire Officer to account

- 3.1 The purpose of the Fire Accountability Board is to support the PFCC in exercising the statutory duties of holding the Chief Fire Officer to account and forms part of a wider ranging programme of assurance across the breadth of Fire and Rescue activities.

3.2 The business of the Board covers areas of concern in performance and service delivery at a strategic level, strategic budget setting, medium term financial planning and other matters requiring ongoing levels of assurance.

3.3 **Fire Accountability Board 14th September 2021**

3.4 **NFRS Performance update** - The Commissioner requested an update on the performance against the measures and metrics contained within the IRMP. This report as per the usual quarterly reports should demonstrate the current position and three-year trend data and analysis. Response times were not included in the report however this will be corrected in future reports to the Accountability Board as this is a core statistic. NFRS assured the Commissioner that the long-term trends positive and this will be reviewed and reported at the December Accountability Board. Generally, the figures and demand were showing signs of return to pre Covid lockdown levels. The Commissioner was assured that in most areas, performance was in the right direction, meaning that residents were safer. He did lead a discussion in relation to pro-activity of NFRS staff on matters such as Home Fire Safety Checks. While accepting that these were now increasing, he was looking for further assurance that all stations and all watches were fully engaged in this process.

3.5 **Capital Investment Plan update** - The Commissioner has previously agreed a capital investment plan with the Chief Fire Officer. He requested an update that outlines the progress that has been made against this plan to the point in the year. Assistant Chief Officer Paul Bullen provided an update and stated that the current capital programme was approved in May 2021 from an iteration in February which was used to inform the 2021/22 budget. There has been very limited spend so far this year across the capital programme and it is unlikely that the entirety of the capital programme will be spent in 2021/22. The global shortage of IT hardware and vehicles due to the Covid 19 pandemic continue to impact of delivery however there is now greater confidence that fleet equipment budgets are on track to deliver. The Commissioner noted progress against this plan; a number of areas that were on track; and some signs of slippage in others. The Commissioner accepted that some of the issues, such as hardware delivery were somewhat out of the controls of NFRS and resulted from the worldwide shortage of microchips and disruptions in the supply chain. The Commissioner while satisfied at this point, stressed that he was looking for the Chief Fire Officer to ensure that resources were in place to provide deliverable solutions for the agreed capital investment plan.

3.6 **Fire Accountability Board 9th November 2021**

3.7 **National Operational Guidance and Fire Standards** - The Commissioner requested an update relating to National Operational Guidance for the Fire Service and the new

emerging Fire Standards for the service. The Commissioner was seeking assurance that NFRS has processes in place to effectively comply with both and how progress is being made to do so. The Commissioner received two updates on the National Operational Standards and Fire Standards, and it was explained that a national self-assessment was now in place and was he assured by the Chief Fire Officer that the local assessment against this will be completed by the end of 2021. The Commissioner was pleased and assured that NFRS had understood the National Operational Guidance and commenced implementation of the elements that related to the local service. He was pleased that some of this was being worked on in collaboration with other services in the East Midlands. The Commissioner was assured that effective progress was currently in place for a service of the size of NFRS but stated that this was a subject he would wish to remain briefed on and would ask for a further update and reassurance in mid-2022.

4. Summary of PFCC Decisions (Fire and Rescue Authority) taken

- [NFRS Decision Record 46 – Fire Budget and Precept 2021 and 2122](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 47 – NFRS Insurance Variation](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 48 – NFRS Pension Administration](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 49 – Units 1-5 Baron Avenue](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 50 – Type B Contract Variation](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record – 51 Belinda Ferrison House](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 52 Occupational Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 53 Basic Occupational Health services](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 54 Mobile Device Terminals](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 55 Aerial Appliances](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 56 PPE Contract variation](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 57 Aerial Turntable Ladder Appliance Contract](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 58 Smoke Alarms](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 59 Digital Radios](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 60 Joint IT Team](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 61 B type appliances variation](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 62 NFRS Youth Engagement Officer](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 63 Compressor Replacement](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 64 NFRS Cleaning Contract](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 65 NFRS Pay Awards](#)

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel considers the content of the report and its appendix.

Stephen Mold
Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner