



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

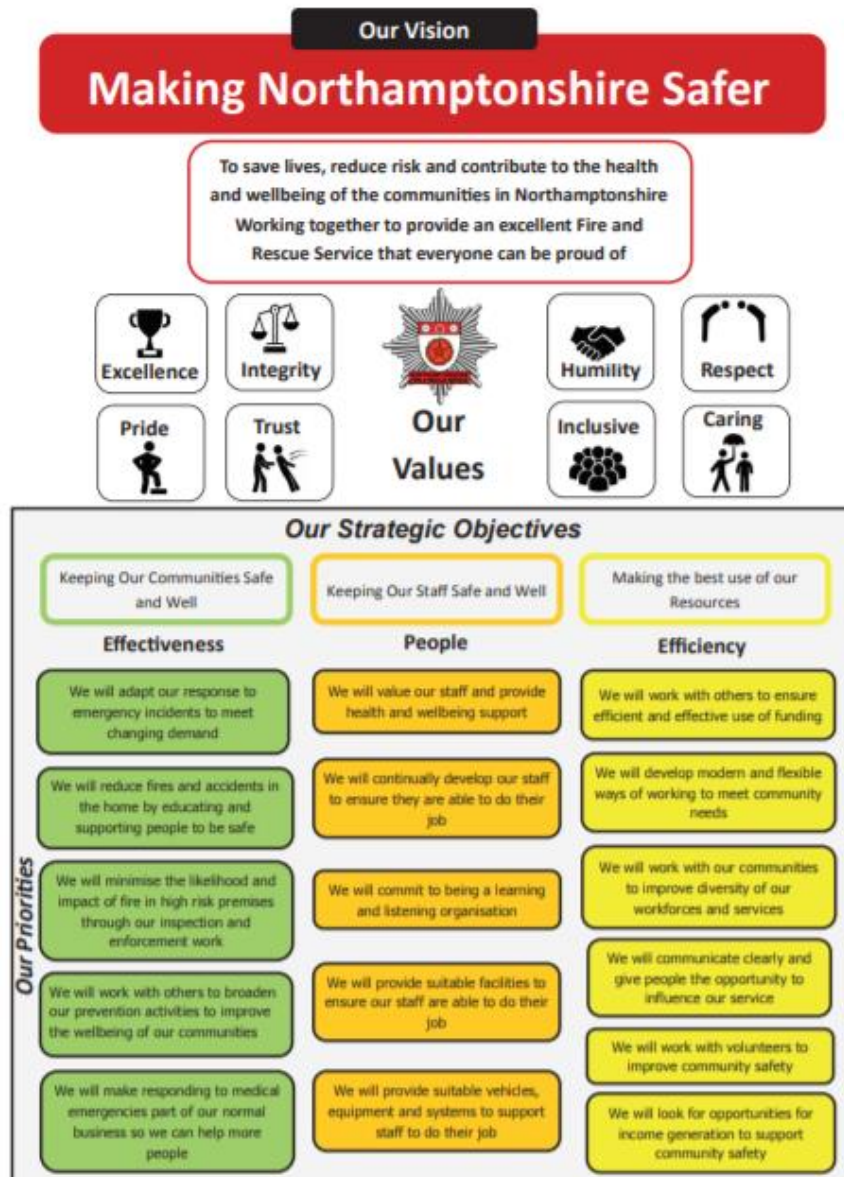
14th April 2022

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 **Chief Fire Officer Darren Dovey to retire later this year** – I thought it was important that I formally put on record that Chief Fire Officer Darren Dovey of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has announced his intention to retire later this year after 35 years in the fire service. Darren has been at the helm of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service since April 2016 and delayed his planned retirement twice – firstly to manage the transfer of the governance of the fire service to the then Police and Crime Commissioner and then again in 2020 to lead the service through the pandemic. Darren will leave in October and has announced his intentions as early as possible to give us the time to recruit a new Chief Fire Officer.

Darren Dovey was appointed Chief Fire Officer on 1 April 2016. He was born in London but has lived in Northampton since the age of 7, growing up and going to school in the Thorplands area. He joined Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue in 1987 and transferred to London Fire Brigade in 1999 moving to Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service in 2008 as an area manager. During his career he worked on the fire at Windsor Castle, was at Russell Square as part of the response to the 07/07 bombings in London and attended the Buncefield Oil Depot fire in Hertfordshire.

I am very grateful for the leadership that Darren has brought to Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and the determined way he dealt with the considerable financial and organisational challenges that the service has faced. I have been constantly impressed by his determination to make our fire service an effective organisation that truly meets the needs of the community and has the safety of the public and its staff at the heart of everything it does. That's been very clear during the pandemic, when Darren has ensured that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has stepped up to support other agencies as well as focussing on their day job, and I know how much that commitment is appreciated. Darren's will be big shoes to fill but he can be assured that he will leave Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service in a much stronger place than it was when he became Chief Fire Officer.

- 2.3 **Fire Service outlines plans for coming years** - A draft strategy for the next three years has outlined how Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service will keep communities safe and tackle potential risks – and residents are being asked to share their views on it. The new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) has taken a detailed look at what risks are present in Northamptonshire and identifies how NFRS can provide an outstanding service and deploy resources to reduce those risks and make the county a safer place for everyone. Firefighters from 22 stations, plus teams from the Prevention and Protection departments, deal with a whole host of risks that have been identified in the Plan, made more challenging by Northamptonshire being one of the fastest growing counties in the country yet still being a significantly rural area. As well as fires at domestic and commercial properties, other risks identified include the county being at the heart of the country's strategic road

network, a sharp growth in the number of logistic hubs, and many waterways and rivers. The Plan outlines three major projects to help meet future pressures:

The Green Agenda

Ensuring that NFRS considers environmental risks such as flooding and wildfires, while also attempting to become greener through a more efficient estate and vehicles within its fleet.

Digital and technological

Updating systems to drive change.

Emergency cover review

Taking a detailed look at how resources are managed.

The Community Risk Management Plan plays a major role in driving forward improvements and outlines our strategy on how we transform the Service and ensure that this county

- 2.4 **Teamwork reinforces arson message to younger people** - My commitment to delivering early intervention and engagement activities to younger people in the county has been supported by a collaboration between the joint Police and Fire Arson Task Force and the Commissioner's Targeted Youth Service. The initiative launched in January as part of a 12-week targeted youth programme that educates young people about risk and danger and sees the Arson Task Force engage with Year 7 students at Kettering Science Academy in an interactive session on deliberate fire setting. Recent arsons in and around Kettering provided real-life examples of the risks and consequences of anti-social behaviour and educate young people on the impact of arson. Following the success of this first session, the teams will be rolling out a series of events over the coming months to deliver early intervention that aims to divert young people from criminal activity and build relationships and trust between the younger generation and fire service personnel. I am delighted that the Targeted Youth Service and Arson Task Force are working together to deliver early intervention activities, a key priority in my Police, Fire and Crime Plan. The power of partnerships, working to mitigate criminal issues such as arson, is the most effective way to reduce crime and protect residents in the county.
- 2.5 **Unite against anti-social behaviour in Daventry** - After firefighters were called to a spate of deliberate fires in Daventry town centre in 2017, the consensus was that something needed to be done to tackle a growing and worrying trend. That year saw fire crews called out 77 times to public areas to tackle fires that had been deliberately started. It was at this point leading organisations in Daventry came together – and the result was Operation Unite. The scheme works to reduce arson and anti-social behaviour in and around Daventry town centre and is run as a partnership that includes amongst others Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service, West Northamptonshire Council, Northamptonshire Police, Daventry Town Council and Neighbourhood Watch.

I have been very impressed to see that the improvement has been stark. Those 77 deliberate fires back in 2017 had dropped down to 17 in 2021, a massive decrease of 78 per cent across the Daventry district. Equally as impressive was that 26 of the deliberate fires in 2017 were in Daventry town centre, but there have now been no deliberately started fires in the town centre in 2020 and 2021. Other aims of Operation Unite include promoting water safety – with partnership work from the Canal & River Trust and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution – as well as creating a safer environment in the Daventry district, reducing waste issues and fly-tipping working alongside Norse, and educating local businesses about fire safety.

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 January 2022

3.4 **Budget 2022/2023** - The Commissioner requests a presentation of final budget proposals for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service for 2022/2023 to include the treasury management and reserves strategies. The S151 Officer and colleagues agreed to undertake the comparison of funding changes between governance transfer and now. Both the Commissioner and Chief Finance Officer recognised the significant work that had been undertaken to get to the current position on the budget. The Commissioner further acknowledged the amount of work that had taken place with government departments to build secure additional funding and thanked everyone involved. The Commissioner was satisfied that the Fire Service had been able to provide a proposed three-year balanced budget, subject to the assumptions outlined within the proposal. The Commissioner reiterated that it was essential that the Fire service delivered robustly against the proposed savings plan. This was required to achieve a balanced budget and to create the ability to reinvest in other areas. The Commissioner asked that the Chief Fire Officer appoint a senior officer to lead the operational review and also provide the indicative timescales for this work. This is an important piece of transformational work and as such, should be prioritised accordingly. The Commissioner formally approved the proposed budget.

3.5 Fire Accountability Board 8th February 2022

3.6 **Budget conditions letter update** - As part of the budget setting process for 2021/2022, the Commissioner and Chief Fire Officer agreed a budget conditions letter outlining areas that were to be delivered in this financial year. The Commissioner requires an update which demonstrates the progress made to date,

on the delivery of these agreed outcomes and measures. The Commissioner commended the progress that had been made on the capital budget and compliance with audit processes, noting that they had improved significantly over the past year. The Commissioner reiterated that the required £149k saving in the budget for 2022/2023 was in relation to cashable savings. While the Commissioner was pleased with the overall progress against the agreed budget conditions, he did raise some concerns about the pace of progress on the operational interoperability activity between Fire and Police. He requested that the Chief Fire Officer link in closely with the Chief Constable to ensure there was a shared vision and commitment to progress

3.7 Code of Ethics paper update - In May 2021, the Fire Service in England adopted a national Code of Ethics. In July 2021 NFRS presented to the PFCC its plans to properly embed this into its daily business. The Commissioner sought an update on progress on achieving this since this time, describing how the activity described in the July 2021 paper has continued and progressed and seeking actual examples of where this adopted code has made a difference. The Commissioner recognised that whilst the Code of Ethics was relatively new for the Fire Service nationally a significant amount of work had already been undertaken locally to embed these and accepted that whilst there had been a number of workstreams concerning ethics and EDI in the service it was difficult to determine what changes had taken place in terms of culture as a direct result of the code, rather than something else. As such the Commissioner requested a further update in relation to cultural changes brought about through all of these workstreams later in 2022.

3.8 Fire Accountability Board 8th March 2022

3.9 NFRS performance update - The Commissioner received an updated on the performance against the measures and metrics contained within the IRMP. The Chief Fire Officer presented on the performance of NFRS against the measures in the IRMP. Overall, the Commissioner was assured that progress continued to be made in reducing the risks to local people, with performance positive in most areas. The Commissioner was concerned about the increased rate of short-term sickness. The Chief Fire Officer stated that this was mainly covid related but that work was needed with some junior managers to ensure that repeated bouts of short-term sickness was identified earlier and managed appropriately. This work is underway. The Commissioner was pleased that the agreed 3-year high risk-based inspection programme was on track.

3.10 Grenfell Inquiry - The Commissioner requires an update that provides an end of year update on the implementation of actions arising from the Grenfell Tower Part 1 report. In the event there are actions that remain outstanding the report should provide detail of what they are, the reason that they remain outstanding and anticipated completion dates. The Commissioner was provided with an update about continued progress relating the local action plan arising from the findings of the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry Part 1. This was considered alongside the recent HMICFRS inspection and it appears that comments on that will be positive. The Commissioner

is assured that at this point progress is good and appropriate and that there is strong governance around this.

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

- [NFRS Decision Record 66 Liquid Fuels Contract](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 67 Asbestos Removal](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 68 Insurance cover](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 69 Compressor Replacement](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 70 NFRS Vehicle RTC Training](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 71 Joint Fleet Workshop](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 72 Provision of Mains Water and Sewerage Contract](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 73 Provision of IT hardware](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 74 RTC hydraulic cutting equipment](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 75 NCFRA Firefighters Apprenticeship Contract](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 76 Asbestos Consultancy Works](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 77 Fire Precept 2022-23](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 78 NCFRA Firefighters Apprenticeship Contract Variation](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 79 External Audit Services Procurement](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 80 Replacement Command & Control System](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 81 NCFRA Firefighters Apprenticeship Additional Contract Variation](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 82 Network Connectivity Services](#)

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