Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)
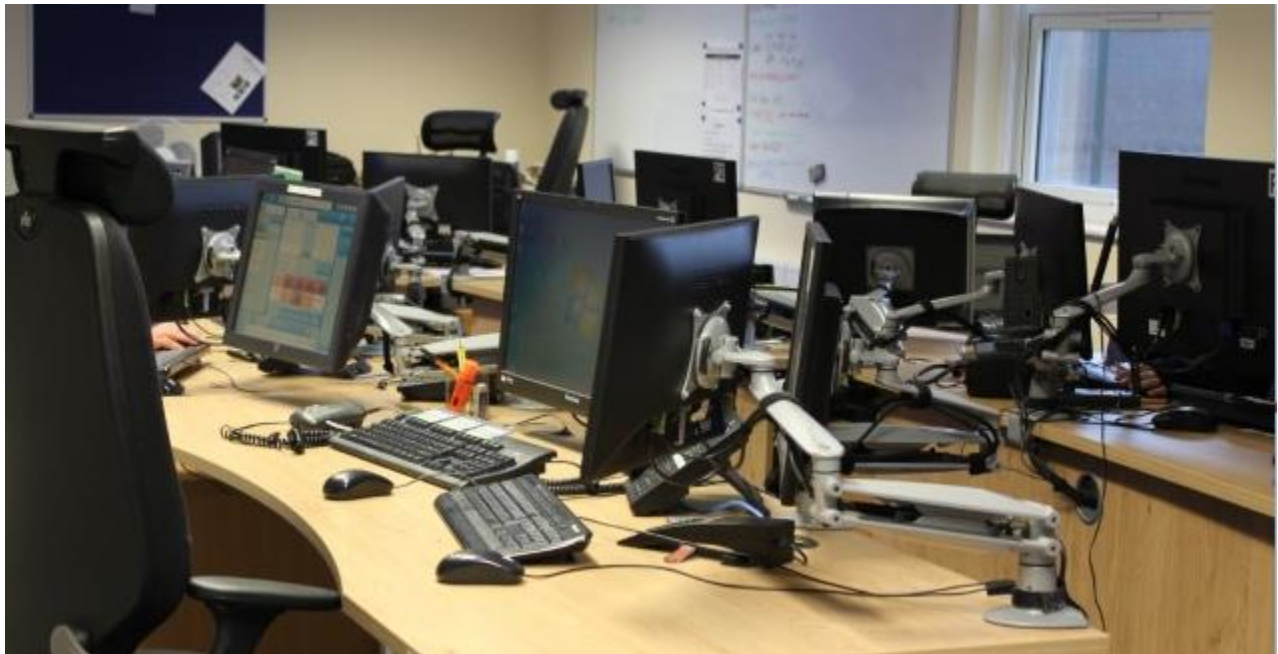
Digital and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy
2021 - 2026

Contents

NFRS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Keeping our communities safe and well
- Keeping our staff safe and well
- Making the best use of resources

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Digital and ICT strategy is to provide a framework to help ensure a digital environment for the Service that enables modern ways of working to deliver enhanced services to operational and support functions, whilst ensuring that the underlying ICT infrastructure is legally compliant and fit for purpose. Ultimately the desire is to enables delivery of the strategic objectives within the Fire and Rescue Plan and CRMP and provides for safe systems of work.

The strategy will inform and underpin the NFRS Capital Programme, as well as driving the required revenue investment in digital and ICT requirements.

It is recognised that the Digital and ICT strategy and plan will be subject to review and change as the "enabling services" project delivers the desire for a joint ICT function and capability.

2 GOVERNANCE

The Digital and ICT strategy is 'owned' by the Chief Fire Officer and will be reviewed by the Fire Executive Group (FEG) annually.

Any financial implications must be agreed by the Chief Finance Officer and included within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Once agreed, the Digital and ICT strategy will be submitted for approval and adoption by the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA).

3 SCOPE

Becoming a 'digital first' organisation is increasingly the direction of travel for all sectors. Digital capability has the potential to enhance service delivery for the public we serve, delivering more efficient and effective services. Digital though can only flourish in an environment where the underlying ICT infrastructure is solid and secure.

The combination of the two linked disciplines will enable NFRS to deliver services to meet the statutory obligations placed upon the NCFRA through the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 and related legislation.

This strategy covers all aspects of digital transformation and ICT including:

- Mobilising systems
- Wide and local area networks
- Business systems (hardware and software)
- Telephony (fixed and mobile)
- Radio communications
- Support and maintenance
- Software application systems both Fire Service specific and 'desktop functions'
- Cyber security and relevant accreditations such as Airwave Firelink, ESN ESMCP and PSN

The move of Governance of NFRS in January 2019, from the County Council to the NCFRA, has opened the way for wider and deeper collaboration and integration, particularly between Northamptonshire Police and NFRS.

ICT is a key enabler to collaborative working and the opportunities for aligning or integrating systems and software must be a primary consideration before significant infrastructure upgrades or changes during the life of this strategy are enacted.

A review of respective Digital/ICT roadmaps will help align infrastructure and software development plans, this should be undertaken as soon as practicable as in doing so, will develop milestones for achieving integrated services for the benefit of the community and each organisation.

4   PRINCIPLES

The Digital and ICT Strategy is driven by the following overarching principles:

- Operational effectiveness
- Safety
- Efficiency
- Legal compliance
- Value for money
- Protect the environment

5   STRATEGIC ICT OBJECTIVES

This strategy and supporting action plans will work to deliver the following strategic objectives:

1. Ensure that digital solutions are customer-centric and a simple to use as possible, putting the public and the end-user first in everything that we do.

   o Those who use the systems and processes that are being put in place will be involved in the design and delivery of the solutions.

2. Introduce and develop digital ways of working to improve capacity and capability in delivering prevention and protection activities.

   o Maximise data and analytics, managing data as a strategic asset, to better inform decisions.

3. Work with Emergency service partner agencies, and in particular Northamptonshire Police, to seek out joint initiatives, opportunities for collaboration and integrate systems and supporting functions to ensure effectiveness and provide value for money. We will maximise the benefits of digital collaboration.

   o Seek opportunities to procure systems and infrastructure with partners to deliver better value for money.
   o Seek to bring together the ICT team with Northamptonshire Police to bolster capacity and capability.
   o Ensure cognisance and alignment with national programmes as appropriate.

4. Develop ICT infrastructure with a 'cloud first' approach to improve data sharing and collaborative opportunities with partners whilst ensuring safety and security of data.

   o Strengthening existing infrastructure to ensure they are safe and secure, putting in place routine maintenance and compliance checks.
   o Seek to migrate at appropriate times to shared and collaborative infrastructure that enhances security.
   o Develop cloud solutions to better enabling sharing of data as required.

5. Increase the opportunity of remote and mobile working by the continued roll out of mobile technologies.

   o Seek to ensure that those who require agile working are enabled to do so.

6 DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

A five-year Digital and ICT 'Roadmap' will be developed to provide the strategic plan for the delivery of this strategy.

On an annual basis, a business plan will be developed to detail delivery within that specific year.

Both of these documents are appended to this strategy.

Opportunities for collaboration with Northamptonshire Police through the Enabling Services integration will be sought throughout the delivery of this strategy.

ICT REPLACEMENT AND DISPOSAL PROGRAMME

The plan that accompanies this strategy below is based on current knowns and operating model. It is envisaged that the ICT delivery plan will change in line with the desire for a Joint ICT team and Joint ICT functionality which is to be delivered via the "Enabling Services" project.

Whilst recognising that the plan below is cross cutting in terms of delivering the strategic objectives the priorities are designed to predominantly deliver the following:

Priority 1 - Essential for core functionality and legal compliance
Priority 2 - Maintain service delivery
Priority 3 - Improve service delivery

Some of the items on the plan will be capital and some revenue. Capital items will form part of the overall Capital plan for the service whereas revenue will be identified within an appropriate revenue budget or ICT revenue reserve.

The capital plan accompanies this strategy.