

FIRE 25

A Vision for 2025

**Northamptonshire
Fire and Rescue Service**

Making Northamptonshire Safer



Contents

Introduction	4
The Environment	6
Enablers for Change	12
The Challenge - Barriers to overcome	16
Integrated Risk Management	20
How do we achieve this? Key focus areas	28
Next steps	34



Introduction

This document aims to set out my vision as Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) for 2025.

NFRS has been on a significant journey that is leading to improved outcomes for the community, either through improved response times, reduced incident numbers, targeted preventative and protective activity or greater accountability.

The fire services role in society is one that is well known and expected, that is based on a traditional model founded in history and knowledge. By outlining how I believe

the service needs to reform, it highlights opportunities to ensure improved community outcomes for the people of Northamptonshire through the efficient and effective use of resources under my control, beyond that of a traditional model.

Northamptonshire is in a unique position to inform the future direction of its services, not only as a consequence of the learning post COVID-19, but in response to the changing political landscape since the introduction of Unitary Authorities and revised partnership structures.

The service has a clear role to play, not only

in informing the future direction of the county, but how the Fire and Rescue Service will reform to meet these new challenges by being at the forefront of change.

The findings of this report will inform the IRMP 2022-2025 to influence the continuous improvement of the Service and our ongoing commitment to making Northamptonshire Safer.

Scope

This report focusses on how the service can further improve community safety outcomes in response to the changing needs of the community, the learning

from major incidents and through diversification of how we use our resources beyond that of the traditional model.

Vision

The vision for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is to “Make Northamptonshire Safer”: to achieve this, in 2025 NFRS will be a resilient, financially secure, flexible, outward facing organisation focused on delivering high quality services to the public.

To do this we will require well trained, well-resourced, highly motivated staff who are focused on delivering a

holistic service in line with both political and public expectation.

This means that we will deliver:

- Fast, effective high quality response to a wide range of emergencies when people need it most.
- Prevention that educates, makes people safer and assists with their general wellbeing.
- Protection that provides advice to a range of stakeholders to assist them in complying with relevant fire safety legislation, with robust consistent enforcement where required.

- Resilience, contributing to countywide and national resilience by assisting in a wide range of risks and issues that can affect the lives, livelihoods and wellbeing of the public.
- Assurance, providing public assurance that they have a good Fire and Rescue Service that is efficient and effective in supporting the community.

We will do this in a way that makes the best use of our resources and delivers “best value” to the public of Northamptonshire.

Darren Dovey
Chief Fire Officer

The Environment

Methodology

I aim to take into account the key Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological, Legal, Environmental and Demographic (PESTLED) changes that influence both the risk and demand profile and how the service aims to deal with them. The document outlines a number of issues, many of which are complex, as such it does not intend to deal with them in detail.

Political

The Fire and Rescue sector has undergone many independent governmental reviews in the last 20 years, most suggesting very similar change proposals but falling short in delivering outcomes due to significant barriers met through outdated national employer arrangements and unwieldy industrial relation mechanisms. The introduction of an independent inspectorate (HMICFRS) in 2018 has provided central government with a coordinated independent insight into the sector which has already suggested proposals for change; the inspectorates proposals along with central governments drive for sector change will provide an evidence base

and add weight to any future proposals for wide scale sector change.

The Government's intentions in respect of the future of fire service governance arrangements will also be an important political factor and both the Government White Paper as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner review will no doubt outline a direction of travel in this regard. Similarly, the publication of the Government's document "[Global Britain in a competitive age - An Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#)" which includes strategic priorities for UK resilience will also shape the role of Fire and Rescue Services into the future.

Within NFRS the key

driver will ultimately be the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (PFCC) Fire and Rescue Plan, the document that sets the key strategic direction for the service. From that, NFRS will devise its risk and resource plan (Integrated Risk Management Plan) to deliver on those strategic objectives and keep the public safe.

Both documents will be informed from a number of other sources - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspections and "State of Fire" reports. Within the wider Fire and Rescue Service the NFCC's "Fit for Future" project, concentrating on key areas for improvement within the sector will help

to drive progress, whilst learning from significant incidents such as Grenfell Tower, Manchester Arena and the COVID19 pandemic will provide a rich source of information to drive change and improvement across a wide spectrum of Fire and Rescue Service activity. The development of Fire Standards will also help to drive improvement and consistency across the sector.

The new unitary local authority model within the county will also start to drive the way we do business. This new model will drive changes in the partnership structures within the county. Particularly and importantly for us, the way that the safeguarding and community safety

structures are organised will dictate how we interact with our partners at local level to deliver services to those who need them the most. Other key partners will be the health, public health and the social care sectors. As we have seen through the pandemic, the way that services are able to support these sectors, both in terms of response and prevention activity, can have a massive positive impact on those most vulnerable.

Economic

The economic environment will also be a key factor in terms of the operating environment as the Country looks to recover from the COVID19 pandemic. This will no doubt influence the Governments thinking

in terms of public sector spending and therefore how it shapes the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) due in the Autumn of 2021. This in turn is likely to set the framework for any discussions on Fire sector funding both in terms of what comes from central government as well as things such as local council tax precept flexibility.

Coupled to this will be the Governments intentions with regard to Police and Crime Commissioners becoming Fire Authorities and how this potentially drives rules with regard to funding across both organisations, especially where infrastructure and services are shared in order to drive best value and efficiencies across both services.

The Environment

Socio-cultural

The most important external key driver will be public expectation - what do the public expect of their Fire and Rescue Service, what do they know about it and do they understand the breadth of activity the service carries out in order to contribute to their safety and wellbeing.

The way that we deliver our vision will be important, therefore it should be underpinned by an ethos in line with the

Fire and Rescue Service core code of ethics, the NFRS core values and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) leadership framework, which sets out the behaviours required to ensure we are acting in accordance to the ethics and values.

Having an underlying ethos will ensure that we are a professional organisation, one whose people respect each other and the public. It will also ensure that we are able to implement a “high trust - low management”

model of working where staff are empowered, self-motivated, innovative and flexible, taking responsibility for their own performance and focusing on outcomes for the good of the public.

Technological

Data will become increasingly important as a key driver of what and how we go about delivering our service to the public. Good data will rely on joined up technology and systems and good evaluation of

activity so that we can both target our work at those who most need it and evaluate whether it is having an impact. Use of data from across a range of partners will also be important in order that we have a more rounded picture of risk, demand and vulnerability - this all feeding into a continuous cycle of better targeting and improvement.

Legal

The legal framework within which the service sits is also a key driver.

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, The Fire and Rescue Service Emergencies Order 2007, The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, The Police and Crime Act 2017, Health and Safety legislation, Equalities legislation and The Human Rights Act, all play a part in dictating both what the service has a duty to do, what the service has a power to do and also how it should do it. This is then distilled into the Fire Service National Framework, which is effectively

the Government’s expectations of FRAs and FRSs.

All of this of course is dependent upon the Government of the day’s policies and priorities.

It will be important in the future that legislation both enables and empowers Chief Fire Officers to deploy FRS resources to tackle a wide range of emergencies and issues both in support of the local community and in times of national crisis where required.

The Environment

Environment

Outcomes from major events will also drive both what and how services undertake their duties. Examples of this are Grenfell Tower, the Manchester Arena attack and the response to COVID19. The outcomes of these may require work at national level, which may include changes to the legislative or industrial relations framework or be issues that drive the development of

Fire Standards in both operational and non-operational activities. In addition, work may be required at local level to implement and embed identified improvements.

Issues such as globalisation, climate change and the environment will also be a key factor in shaping our services with increased risk of incidents such as flooding and wildfire as well as pandemic and terrorism. In addition to ensuring that we have

robust and professional response to these types of incidents we will need to work collaboratively on strategies to help prevent them in the first place. The environment and climate change are also likely to influence other things such as our fleet, equipment and estates strategy as we move to a position, not only where we can deal with the operational issues, but also ensure that we reduce our carbon footprint by having more efficient buildings and

vehicles and exploiting green technology where we can.

Another key driver will be linked to the development, growth and population of the county. We know that Northamptonshire is one of the fastest growing counties in the country sitting where it does with good transport links to a number of major cities. We also know that this growth is driving the building of homes, businesses and infrastructure, which

places demands on the service in a range of ways. In a post-Grenfell world we are now aware of risks that may materialise from the current built environment where buildings may not be built in a way that is commensurate with fire safety legislation or building regulations.

Demographic

The demography of the county will also dictate how our service is shaped

over the next few years. We know that we have an ageing population and we also know that there is a link between vulnerability and age in many cases. In addition, the county is going to become more diverse as people from many parts of the world settle here and make a life for themselves. Our services will need to take all of this into account to ensure we are meeting the needs of the public in the widest possible sense.

Enablers for change

To make change happen a number of key enablers will be required. While there is an interaction between these enablers, it is unlikely that all will move at the same pace. We will need to drive the opportunities that these key enablers provide as and when we have the opportunity to exploit them.

Our People

The biggest key enabler is people: we need to have a workforce that is competent and well trained but also flexible, innovative and motivated. This creates organisational capacity as staff are both empowered and confident to “just do” and will create the “high trust – low management” approach we are hoping to build. To do this, skills will be critical and identifying the skills required across the range of roles within

the organisational will be key. These range from the generic skills we will all need in a modern day public service such as ICT and management skills, to those specific to the role being performed. Leadership will also be a key part of transformation. We will need leaders throughout the service, in every station and department, staff who are accountable and responsible and committed to delivering the vision of the service

and also committed to delivering change in order to achieve it.

Equality and Diversity

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is also a key enabler as it ensures that the service is both recruiting the best talent across the full spectrum of the population and also importantly, delivering services that are tailored to the needs of the whole community. EDI is also

closely linked to leadership and productivity as it will be imperative that leaders throughout the organisation understand that it is key to a well-motivated workforce that people feel confident to be themselves at work and be accepted within an inclusive environment. This is at the heart of delivering quality services.

Finance

Funding is also a key enabler. We know that in the past, NFRS has not

been as fortunate as other FRSs in terms of finance for a variety of reasons. This has at times slowed the pace of progress, particularly in key areas such as ICT. It is therefore, critical that NFRS becomes a financially stable organisation with robust financial plans and financial management as well as a sustainable and predictable funding over the medium term. Some of this will depend upon central government policy around the comprehensive

spending review, funding formulas and rules around council tax and business rates however, ensuring rigorous internal financial management such as compliant procurement and contract management and good budget management will also be key to delivering financial stability. This will be even more important in a post-COVID world as funding potentially becomes more scarce.

Enablers for change

Collaborative Opportunities

Collaboration will become increasingly important within the service, within the sector, with Northamptonshire Police, local authorities and also further afield where it makes sense to do so. In an increasingly complex, interconnected landscape it will make no sense for organisations to do things in isolation or double up on effort where there is no need to do so. Joined up enabling services will help to create more professional services and also create the capacity and resilience required to support transformation and change. Collaboration in areas such as a joint estates strategy will ensure that the public is receiving best value and that money is targeted at front line services.

Within the wider Fire sector, collaboration will be important in driving improvement with projects such as National Operational Guidance (NOG) and the development of Fire Standards that will support both operational safety and consistency across the sector.

Evidence Based Approach

Finally, data, digital and technology will be a key enabler. With regard to data, both in terms of what we generate, what we are able to deliver and also what we are able to use. Having accurate data will rely of having joined up systems that are able to deliver data in a timely fashion. The way we use data will also become increasingly important, as we will constantly need to challenge ourselves

to show that we are targeting our resources to where they are most needed. Evaluation will also be a key part of that data, looking at what we have done, what has been successful and what has not in terms of qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Using technology to digitalise internal processes will also be important to creating capacity by ensuring that current, inefficient, manual processes are made more efficient and effective. Finally utilising digital media such as websites and social media platforms will be key to getting our message out to the public, whether this be in relation to what we do or in relaying safety messages and information, reaching a wide range of stakeholders at the click of a button.



The Challenge - Barriers to Overcome

Within the Fire and Rescue Service there are a number of significant barriers that in effect stifle change, reform and transformation. Like the drivers and enablers described above, some of these will be external to the service and some will be internal. Many of these barriers are well known, having been identified in a number of reports over the last 20 years or so, including the most recent HMICFRS State of Fire and COVID reports.

The Legislative Framework

The biggest of these is the legislative framework within which the service sits. This is because the duties set out within the 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act are too narrow to allow FRs to easily make a sustainable wider contribution to issues within their local areas. While the act does give FRAs and hence FRs the power to act in a wider sense, it does not

confer a duty to do so, therefore with issues such as job descriptions and role maps inextricably linked to the duties in the Act, progress is sometimes slow and at risk of not being sustainable.

Changing primary legislation will require the support of the Government of the day and as such, will need to sit within its own priorities. Very rarely is the Fire and Rescue Service seen as an important political issue and it rarely makes it

into major political party national manifestos. Issues such as the economy, health, education, law and order and more latterly BREXIT dominate as doorstep issues and hence parliamentary time. Therefore, reforming the primary legislation within which the service sits would open up the contribution that the fire service can make in a post COVID world, whether that be in response to a wider range of emergencies or in delivering health, public health or crime prevention

in order to assist those most vulnerable to be safe and contribute to their wellbeing.

Industrial Relations

The current industrial relations framework needs to be reformed in order for it to be more enabling in terms of driving change and reform within acceptable timescales i.e. months not years. That is not to say that terms and conditions of employment and remuneration are

not legitimate issues that will need to be resolved, but that the mechanisms within which they are agreed need to have more objectivity and independence. There is little doubt that the current arrangements through the National Joint Council (NJC) have not been able to deliver meaningful and sustainable national reform either in modernising the service or for that matter, in advancing pay. Instead the current arrangements have largely led to the sector being

inward looking leading to the status quo being maintained, something that does not serve the public or employees well.

Having a more enabling industrial relations framework will therefore lead to a more outwardly focused sector where the benefits of change both for the workforce, in terms of more modern and flexible working practices, and improvements to the delivery of the service to the public are seen as key outcomes.

The Challenge - Barriers to overcome

The Financial Landscape

Funding will be another key barrier, as sustainable funding is a pre-requisite for the medium to long term planning that public services need if they are to invest for the future. Too often, planning can only be considered in the short term due to uncertainty around future economic, public sector and funding policy. Planning in this way serves neither the FRS nor the public well, as decisions can become both expedient and expensive.

Inefficient IT systems

Inefficient systems and processes brought about by having out-of-

date or non-integrated technology or having reliance on paper-based systems, can also be a barrier as too much organisational effort is required in order to ensure that information and data is accurate, timely and available to those that need it. This can lead to decisions being delayed or being made based on incomplete information, leading to poor decision making in some circumstances.

Being Change Ready

As people will be the key driver to taking the service forward, they will need the skills to operate in a new environment where building partnerships and

delivering change is a key part of the role. Lack of skills and competence can therefore become the biggest barrier to transformation. As a service, we will need to ensure that we have a robust workforce plan that identifies not only when we will need to recruit staff but also identifies the skills required throughout the workforce in order for them to be effective at both delivering high quality services and delivering change.

Capacity

All of the barriers identified in this section effectively lead to a lack of capacity and resilience within the service, two things that are critical if change is to be effected successfully.



Integrated Risk Management

The Fire Service could contribute a wide variety of activities across all strands of community risk management. These will be dependent on the local risk and demand profile within each service area and also as laid out within the relevant legislation as outlined above.

Integrated Risk management is broken down into 4 areas; Response, Prevention, Protection and Resilience.

Response

Fast, effective, professional emergency response will continue to be a key part of what the service delivers. It is what the public expect of the FRS and as such is key to maintaining the good reputation of the service in the eyes of those we serve.

However, as has been seen during the Coronavirus pandemic there is a gap between the capability that services have available to them to

respond and the duties they have in relation to response as laid down within the legislative framework. There are also limitations brought about by the industrial relations framework that can in effect slow or stop the ability of the service to respond to an emerging situation such as COVID19. This can create a tension between the service's own IRMP, the issue at hand and their duties within legislation.

Accountability/ Transparency

A key part of response will also be the publication of a suite of simply understood standards that inform the public what they can expect of their service.

A Flexible Response Model

In order to facilitate these standards, a flexible approach to response will be required, moving away from a single method such as 4/5 people on a Fire Appliance to a

method that utilises different vehicles and crew sizes to better match the resource to the risk. That is not to say that we will not need a fleet of traditional appliances as they in themselves are a flexible resource, carrying a range of Fire and Rescue capability and able to be crewed with between 3 and 6 people, offering both flexible response and also resilience to deal with larger incidents.

Below is a non-exhaustive

list of emergencies and issues that FRSs should be able to respond to in the interests of the public:

- Fires
- Incidents involving transport ie RTCs, railway, aircraft etc.
- Rescues from height
- Sub-surface rescues
- Incidents involving water/flood
- Incidents involving collapsed structures/buildings
- Incidents involving animals
- Terrorist related incidents (Marauding Terrorist Attack etc.)
- CBRNe incidents
- Falls (of persons)
- Missing persons
- Immediate safeguarding issues
- Pandemic response
- Assisting other agencies (Police, Ambulance, NHS, Local Authority etc.)
- Any other response where the service has the capability ie people, skills, equipment etc.

Prevention

Like response, prevention is one of the key strands of IRMP and also one of the areas where there is a mismatch between the capability and capacity that the service has and what it currently delivers.

The prevention agenda has expanded over the last five years in terms of work such as “safe and well” checks and roles in road and water safety, some of which sits outside of the duties of the service as laid down in the 2004 Act. There are still more that can be delivered, particularly in collaboration with partner agencies, because the Fire Service benefits

from having high levels of public trust and can gain access to people that other agencies may not be able to.

The NFCC Fit for Future document states the strategic intent for Fire Services in relation to prevention should be that: “Fire and rescue services support new and innovative ways to prevent fires and other emergencies. Firefighters work with people who are at risk in local communities to make them safer in all aspects of their lives, not only from fire.”

Partnership Approach

This means Fire Services being joined up with their partner agencies through the local partnership structure ie Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Board and also local delivery boards. It is also important that the Fire Service plays an active part in work such as the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) in order to make their prevention work better understood, targeted and more effective. Safeguarding is and will continue to be critical, as such it will also be important that the service is represented at all levels of the county’s

safeguarding structures.

Local Risk / Community engagement

In addition to being “plugged in” at county level, it will be equally important that local stations are actively engaged within their communities. Station Commanders should be visible at local partnership level and station-based staff should be proactively engaging with communities, especially under represented communities, in their local areas. This will not only benefit from a prevention perspective but is also in effect “positive action”, which can bring benefits

during subsequent recruitment campaigns as communities are already aware of the service and its role.

Being active within county and national partnerships will ensure that prevention work is being delivered in a holistic way, based on the needs of the community where one agency can deliver a range of services, assistance and signpost people to where they can find more help where required.

Prevention activity that could be carried out by FRS personnel include:

- Fire Safety

- Arson reduction
- Road safety
- Water safety
- Flood prevention
- Youth engagement
- Firesetter counselling
- Safeguarding
- Preventing animal related incidents
- Falls prevention
- Crime prevention
- Health advice
- Public Health advice on fitness, childhood obesity, smoking cessation etc
- Mental health
- Social isolation

Protection

Protection has been a key focus nationally following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in 2017. This comes after years when Protection capacity was downsized during the austerity period.

Since the Grenfell fire, there has been a wide scale review of all areas of the risks associated with the built environment. This has come about through the outcomes of both the Hackitt review and also the public enquiry into the disaster and includes changes to legislation, building regulations, competence frameworks and Risk Based Inspection

Programmes (RBIP). In addition, funding has been made available to FRSs to complete work directly related to high rise residential buildings and also to uplift their protection capacity in light of the changes and increased focus.

The NFCC Fit for Future describes the improvement required across the protection function across the sector as: “Fire protection activity carried out by fire and rescue services is redefined and expanded by using new professional standards, competence requirements and training

for firefighters and specialist protection staff assisted by a significant reallocation of resources through increases in productivity”.

Building Protection Capacity

This will be no different within Northamptonshire, as we look to renew our risk based inspection programme based on new and emerging information and build protection capacity by increasing the size and expertise of the dedicated protection team while utilising operational crews to carry out protection inspections in line with

the risk within the county. In simple terms the Protection team will focus on more complex buildings and carrying out consistent enforcement while operational crews will assist with “volume” work around risks such as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) or retail at busy times of the year like Christmas.

Building Competence

To do this we will need to focus on the competence requirements in line with the new competence framework for Protection and ensure that operational crews have the requisite training to

be able to carry out the visits we need them to. For more complex issues, access to fire engineers will be important in order that we have the required expertise available. This is likely to be in partnership with other FRSs.

Enhancing Risk Information

Another key improvement will be the joining of protection data and operational risk data in the guise of “Site Specific Risk Information” (SSRI). This will ensure that all risks associated with a premises are kept in one place providing a full picture of it. This could be further

enhanced by the inclusion of people and vulnerability data where appropriate, for example in high rise buildings to provide a full risk picture for the premises.

Changing Legislation

Another feature of Protection will be the engagement with businesses across the county, making them aware of changes to legislation and helping them to comply. However, where required we must be able to enforce in a robust and consistent manner.

Resilience

Ensuring that NFRS is both a resilient organisation and also that it contributes to resilience at both national and local level will be a key deliverable in terms of our IRMP.

National Resilience

Like many services, NFRS hosts various National Resilience (NR) assets namely a High Volume Pump (HVP) and Mass Decontamination Unit (MDU). In addition, NFRS maintain a flood rescue capability in the form of boats and has a cadre of National Interagency Liaison Officers (NILOs), all of which can be mobilised locally and nationally to deal with major incidents. It will be important that NFRS

is able to maintain these assets in order that we can play our part in maintaining national response capability as well as being able to respond locally.

Community Risk

NFRS will need to be aware of local risk by taking account of the Northamptonshire Community Risk Register (CRR) when developing its IRMP. This is both in terms of response and prevention, where the service can contribute to things such as flood prevention by co-ordinating flood wardens or local volunteers, especially via the On-Call fire stations that sit within the largely rural part of the county.

Organisational Resilience

Organisational resilience is also important to ensure that we are able to deliver on all strands of our IRMP and is achieved through implementing many of the things mentioned in previous sections such as financial stability, workforce planning and effective ICT.

Staff Wellbeing

Personal resilience will also be important and as such the wellbeing of staff should be a key focus for services ensuring that a range of wellbeing services are available that are able to deal with both physical and mental health issues.



How do we achieve this?

Key focus areas

The nine areas identified below are key to driving transformation and change while delivering quality services to the public. As such a more detailed action plan will be required that sits underneath them enabling the delivery of both them and the PFCC's Fire and Rescue Plan.

1 Legislative and Industrial relations framework

Whilst we are able to influence this, changes to both legislation and the national industrial relations mechanisms are largely outside the control of the service. Changes to these are likely to require changes to primary legislation and as such will require government action.

The Government's "White Paper" on fire service reform, due in the summer of 2021 will be an important signal as to the

future direction of travel in this regard.

2 Community risk management

The development of the next IRMP that takes the service toward 2025 will be a critical document as it delivers the PFCC's Fire and Rescue Plan. Therefore, it will be important that it is comprehensive and makes use of all of the information and data available to us from both within and outside of the organisation. It should take into account the risk and demand within the county and also utilise the

NFCC community risk tools when available. This means looking at risk and demand across the county and beyond and then deciding on the level of resource required across the four areas of IRMP, taking into account the standards of operational response (SOR) and the Firecover model required to achieve it, the Protection risk based inspection programme (RBIP), the Prevention strategy and county and national resilience requirements.

One of the key areas that will need an overhaul in order to support the IRMP will be the Retained (on-

call) Duty System. For many years, services all over the country have carried out on-call reviews and tried a range of initiatives in order to improve the recruitment, retention and availability of the retained duty system. However little has improved as most have been done within the current framework, which was effectively designed to create a duty system for another age and is fundamentally out of date. Work will be required at both national and local level to devise a system that matches the way people live their lives, that is more flexible and one that recognises the

commitment required to be an on-call firefighter today. This is likely to cost more per on-call staff member but will create capacity to deliver the IRMP, particularly in the more rural parts of the county. It also has the potential to cut costs elsewhere, such as in overtime, which is currently utilised to keep appliances available.

3 Funding

Funding again is something that we can influence but not directly control. Key to a sustainable funding model will be the Governments

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and in particular any changes to the way that funding is allocated to the Fire Sector going forward. Linked to this will be the decisions made in term of precept flexibility for Fire Authorities and also business rates policy into the future as part of that overall funding model. This in turn will assist, together with good internal financial management, in developing a sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan that incorporates both revenue and capital requirements that meet the need of the service.

How do we achieve this?

Key focus areas

4 Governance

Good internal governance will be key to ensuring that the “business” of the service is done in an open and transparent way, is legally compliant and is in line with the ethos of the service. There should be a clear Target Operating Model, with proportionate internal structures in place to ensure that decisions can be taken at the correct level to facilitate progress and delivery of the service. Performance monitoring at organisational, departmental and

individual level and assurance processes should also be built in to ensure that delivery is taking place and that the processes and systems are working as they should.

5 People

The people within organisations are the key to its success and the aim of the service will be to develop responsible and accountable staff. To do this we will need to focus on leadership and management development at all levels, including

those not in traditional managerial roles such as Firefighters. Key to this will be a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion as a lack of understanding in this area undermines the organisation’s ability to deliver excellence. Wellbeing should also be a key aspect with a range of pro-active and reactive wellbeing support available for employees. Recruitment, promotion, development and maintenance of competence will also be key components. This should all be wrapped

into a comprehensive workforce plan and people strategy that delivers the ethos of a “high trust – low management” organisation.

6 Infrastructure

Good infrastructure will help to facilitate the vision of the service in the same way that poor infrastructure is a major barrier. There will need to be a continued focus on developing a comprehensive infrastructure plan that includes estates, vehicles,

equipment and technology and ICT. This will need to be set in line with the operational priorities of the service but also be affordable in the short, medium and long term.

7 Digital, Data and Technology

Access to good quality data and having efficient systems through increasing digitalisation and joined up technology will be a pre-requisite to delivering high quality

services to those who are most vulnerable. It is also key to creating capacity within the organisation as it does away with cumbersome manual processes and allows us to focus more on outcomes. Digital will also be key to better service delivery by utilising digital platforms to provide information to the public. As a service, we will need a comprehensive digital strategy and to continue to invest across the piece in terms of ICT infrastructure and systems that meet the user’s requirements.

How do we achieve this?

Key focus areas

8 Efficiency and Best Value

It should never be forgotten that in effect, the service does not have any money of its own. All of the money utilised by the service is the public's money and as such we have a duty to ensure that we use it wisely and to their benefit. This means

that we should collaborate where it makes sense to do so, by sharing enabling services with Northamptonshire Police or through interoperable service delivery with a range of partners or through sharing estate and infrastructure wherever possible. Similarly, we should collaborate within the sector utilising national

products such as NFCC products, Fire Standards and National Operational Guidance in order to avoid duplication of effort and exploit sector wide expertise. Good financial management, contract management and adherence to best practice purchasing and procurement rules will also ensure that the public are receiving the best

possible value for their taxes.

9 Capacity building

In order to be successful as an organisation we will need to create capacity so that we can deliver this vision and concentrate our effort where it is most effective, that is in

delivering services and not with internal matters or processes which should facilitate it. The areas outlined in 1 to 8 above set out to create capacity within the organisation.

That will be from having an enabling legislative and industrial relations framework, a clear IRMP that focuses on risk and demand, good internal

governance, efficient and effective systems and processes that provide timely and accurate data and information that allow well trained motivated people to deliver quality services to the public by taking responsibility, being accountable and utilising the infrastructure provided to do the job in the best interests of the public.

Next steps

The vision as set out within this document is an ambitious vision for the service for 2025. In order to achieve it, many things will need to come together, some of which will require reform at national level and some of which will require change locally from within the service. The successful implementation will require “buy in” from all stakeholders.

We cannot ignore the fact that the world has changed since much of the framework within which the Fire Service operates was put into place. The pace of change is increasing, as such the Fire Service needs to change not only

to maintain its relevance but more importantly to increase its influence as the “go to” agency when it comes to making people safer, whether that be through prevention, protection or response to a wide range of incidents and circumstances.

In simple terms this means the Fire and Rescue Service diversifying its response, prevention and resilience roles and increasing its capacity and expertise within protection work. This will lead to increases in risk-targeted productivity, aimed at keeping the public safe and contributing to their overall wellbeing.

Transforming the Service in this way also has the potential to bring benefits to the workforce, as the variety and breadth of activity and the skills required to undertake them increases, bringing with it greater job satisfaction and potentially increased remuneration.

The Government’s White Paper, due in the summer of 2021, will set out the intention to reform the overarching framework at national level, however local change will also be required if the service is to continue to deliver its strategic vision of “Making Northamptonshire Safer” as we move towards 2025 and beyond.

FIRE25



FIRE 25

