



# Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)

## Fleet Strategy 2021 - 2031



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## **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 fleet strategy is to provide a framework to help ensure a legally compliant and fit for purpose fleet that supports the requirements of the [NFRS Response Strategy](#), enables delivery of the strategic objectives within the [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) and [Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\)](#) and provides for safe systems of work.

The strategy will inform and underpin the [NFRS Capital Programme](#).

### **2 GOVERNANCE**

The Fleet 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 Fleet Strategy will be submitted for approval and adoption by the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA).

### **3 SCOPE**

The NFRS fleet is multi-faceted but can essentially be divided into two broad categories of vehicle:

- Red fleet – This covers front line operational response vehicles, which includes appliances, specials, officer cars, pods, trailers, boats and any other asset, equipped with emergency lighting and sirens.

- White fleet – This covers non-operational response support vehicles, to include, protection, prevention, facilities, stores, ICT, hydrant, equipment, and Breathing Apparatus (BA) vehicles not fitted with emergency lighting and sirens.

Also included in the scope is:

- Fleet maintenance

## 4 PRINCIPLES

The Fleet Strategy is driven by the following overarching principles:

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

Each of these principles is briefly explained below:

Operational effectiveness – NFRS fleet requirements are driven and informed by the [Fire and Rescue Plan](#), the [CRMP](#) and the [Response Strategy](#) whereby known and predicated risks are identified. It must therefore be tailored to meet the countywide risk profile whilst being suitable for the range of duty systems in operation which comprise the strategic fire and rescue cover model.

Safety – This falls into two categories:

- Community safety – ensuring the number, type and reliability of operational vehicles appropriately reflects the community risk and is adequate to meet the [Standards of Operational Response](#).
- Firefighter safety – ensuring vehicles and core equipment remain fit for purpose through effective whole-life maintenance and replacement programmes.

Efficiency – This strategy will ensure that as far as is possible, an intelligence led approach will apply in optimising whole-life value.

Vehicle life will be maximised through:

- Selecting appropriate financing models
- Using data to rotate vehicles through higher mileage locations etc.
- Effective maintenance programmes

Legal compliance – This is facilitated through an effective fleet management, administration and maintenance function. In addition, vehicle use will be underpinned by policies and will reflect all requirements of relevant legislation, Her Majesty's Revenue and Custom (HMRC) regulations etc.

Value for money – Vehicle purchases and disposals will be in line with the Corporate Governance Framework.

Wherever possible NCFRA will utilise national frameworks for the procurement of replacement vehicles and will opt for 'standard fit' options wherever practicable. Some tailoring is a requirement of meeting NFRS operational requirements and doctrine. Approach to vehicle disposal will seek to achieve the highest return, taking into account any constraints and restrictions arising from national security policies.

Protect the environment – NFRS is cognisant of environmental impacts of vehicles and will pay due regard to this in procurement and operation of all vehicles within the fleet.

Wherever practicable, consideration will be given to alternative fuelled vehicles.

Vehicle use policies will seek to ensure efficient use of service vehicles, minimising environmental impacts.

## 5 CURRENT POSITION

The NFRS fleet is currently comprised as follows:

Rescue Pumps	Compact Appliance	Specials	PODs	Trailers	4x4	Mini-bus	Vans	Cars	Misc	Total
32	4	12	7	9	16	1	34	47	2	164

The projected life of each vehicle type has been reviewed in recent years and is currently as follows:

Vehicle life	Rescue Pumps	Compact Appliance	Specials	PODs	Trailers	4x4	Mini-bus	Vans	Cars (response)	Cars (white fleet)
Years	15	15	15-20	15	15	12	10	10	5	10

Whilst there is no formal sector or national benchmark for vehicle life, the terms above are unquestionably at the top end of any fire sector comparator data sets.

In recent years and since the cessation of central government Capital Distribution grants for fire and rescue authorities, the previous County Council Fire Authority were unable to fund a capital programme for replacement vehicles for the fire and rescue service.

This means that whilst still fit for purpose, some of the existing fleet is already beyond scheduled life. This legacy will take several years to overcome and will require careful management of the existing fleet across the life of this strategy to ensure continuity.

This is likely to mean increased revenue and maintenance costs and potentially increase risk to the Authority until the fleet comes back within the lifeing policy of the service.

Recent capital programmes since the governance change have begun to address this issue although prioritisation will continue to be required. Prioritisation will be based on the most efficient way to deliver the outcomes in this strategy whilst ensuring the delivery against the [CRMP](#) and ensuring the safety of staff and the community.

## 6 GENERAL APPROACH, KEY ISSUES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Due to the known financial legacy issues and constraints, it is safe to assume that the fleet replacement programme will require intelligence led prioritisation across the entire fleet and throughout the 10-year period.

Therefore the focus of this strategy is upon the stabilisation of the fleet, bringing it fleet back into lifeing policy as set out in [section 5](#) above.

This will ensure that the Service's strategic capability, in terms of appliances, is fit for purpose and upgraded to take account of new technology and risks. In addition the Service will need to ensure that it takes account of the outcomes of the Grenfell enquiry, in terms of aerial capability, and any other national initiatives during the life of this strategy.

Thereafter and in line with the review of risk, the [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) and the [CRMP](#), the fleet strategy will adapt to ensure that it continues to meet the strategic requirements as set out in these documents. This will involve reviewing capabilities and options before committing to replacing them on a like for like basis.

### Red fleet

- Fire appliances – NFRS currently predominately operates a fleet of type B fire appliances on a common chassis (currently Scania). This standardisation provides for efficient fleet operation, maintenance and parts and reduces driver and crew familiarity training requirements for operational staff.
- NFRS operational doctrine incorporates the use of cold cut firefighting technology. This is a cornerstone of the [Response Strategy](#) and also drives the commercial strategy through the delivery of training to other fire services. It is intended that all replacement fire appliances during the life of this strategy are equipped with this capability.
- NFRS is evaluating the use of (4) smaller ("Compact") fire appliances in strategic locations across the county. These vehicles were funded through central government transformation bid grant. They are replacing 3 conventional appliances overdue for replacement.

This strategy and the supporting replacement programme will be reviewed once the evaluation of these appliances is complete in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the [CRMP](#). Should this be the case this may allow for an option of a mixed fleet i.e. both type B and smaller appliances strategically placed around the County to meet the changing risk. This could in turn lead to a reduction in cost of the future appliance replacement programme.

- Special appliances – replacement of these vehicles will need to be intelligence led and will need to have considered all strategic options including a collaborative approach with neighbouring fire authorities.

This analysis work will be undertaken within the life of this strategy as specialist capability comes up for replacement. Key elements of this will be future aerial appliance capability within the county in the light of experience gained in the use of Combined Aerial Rescue Pump (CARP) appliances, which have proven to be

unreliable, and will also need to take account of any emerging outcomes from the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire.

NFRS currently also operates National Resilience assets as part of a national strategic capability, but these are also used as a local (countywide) capability. The future funding of replacement vehicles (or not) by central government will be a key consideration, if not a dependency, for the longer term. This strategy will be reviewed in the light of any emerging information in respect of these assets.

Trailers and PODs – Some specialist and support provision are achieved through the use of Hook Loaders and PODs. Learning from the Service's experience in having taken this approach will need to be considered in replacement proposals, in particular, the balance between cost efficiency and operational availability and effectiveness.

- In the interests of safety, all front-line appliances in NFRS are equipped with CCTV and telematics, this approach will continue through the life of this strategy, taking account of any new or emerging technological advances. In addition there are emerging issues with regard to contamination and "clean cab" policies, this issue will need to be a consideration in the design of future appliances.

Officer response cars – NFRS operates a 'provided car' approach for all officers on the operational flexi-duty rota and the principal officers on the Gold duty rota. Changes in HMRC regulations in the 2017 Finance Act resulted in the cessation of any private use of these vehicles.

Currently there is a mix of owned and lease vehicles. Replacement proposals for these vehicles will always be informed by financial advice but with the reality of needing to extend the life of Officer response cars beyond the previous term, ownership is the preferred model. To minimise the capital requirements in the medium term, the approach will be to seek to purchase existing lease vehicles at end of contract.

Where procurement of new Officer response cars is required, this will be undertaken through established frameworks, continuing the collaboration already established with Northamptonshire Police and/or the wider fire and rescue sector.

The car fleet as a whole is subject to ongoing review following the reduction in the number of operational officers in recent years. Should this review generate a reduction in the required fleet, the opportunities to purchase the current leased vehicles will also consider where these could be used to replace white fleet vehicles that are due for replacement.

White fleet – The white fleet comprises of pool cars, vans etc. that are necessary to deliver or facilitate the delivery of front-line services but are not blue-light equipped emergency response vehicles. All of this part of the fleet is subject to ongoing review and proposals for replacement of these vehicles will be intelligence and needs led.

Currently, Officer response cars and much of the white fleet are not equipped with camera or telematics technologies, this will need to be a consideration during the life of this strategy.

Fleet maintenance - Currently this is provided through in-house arrangements, underpinned by an independent review which, whilst conducted several years ago, concluded at the time that these arrangements were providing 'best value'.

Enabling Services work will seek to drive greater efficiencies in this model through bringing together management and administration of fleet functions between Police and NFRS. The Estates Strategy seeks to bring those functions together if financially viable and this will deliver further opportunities for enhancing fleet maintenance. The implementation of this fleet strategy will end any remaining lease agreements on vehicles thereby increasing the number of 'owned' vehicles.

To address the increase in fleet maintenance which will arise as a consequence, a proposal will be generated to increase workshop capacity to accommodate this additional work, at no additional cost to the existing total revenue budget.

Further to this work will be carried out under the "enabling services" project to scope the benefits of having a joint Fire/Police fleet function.

## INVENTORY OF VEHICLES

The inventory of NFRS vehicles is a dynamic document therefore is not included as an appendix but can be viewed on the [NFRS website](#).



## VEHICLE REPLACEMENT/PROCUREMENT PROGRAMME

### Overview

The requirement for immediate vehicle replacements will exceed available capital funding for the medium term future, proposals are therefore based upon analysis of need and cost vs benefit and have taken account of all opportunities to extend useable life.

It should be noted that all costings in the plan are in thousands (K) and are estimates based on historical figures uplifted for inflation in year 1, no inflation has been added for future years at this point. They are therefore illustrative and subject to the outcomes of tendering.

Priority 1 - Essential for core functionality and legal compliance

Priority 2 - Maintain service delivery – Strategic objectives

Priority 3 - Improve service delivery – Strategic objectives

## DISPOSAL PROGRAMME

Linked to the [capital programme](#), the disposal programme sets out what types of vehicles will be disposed of and when.