

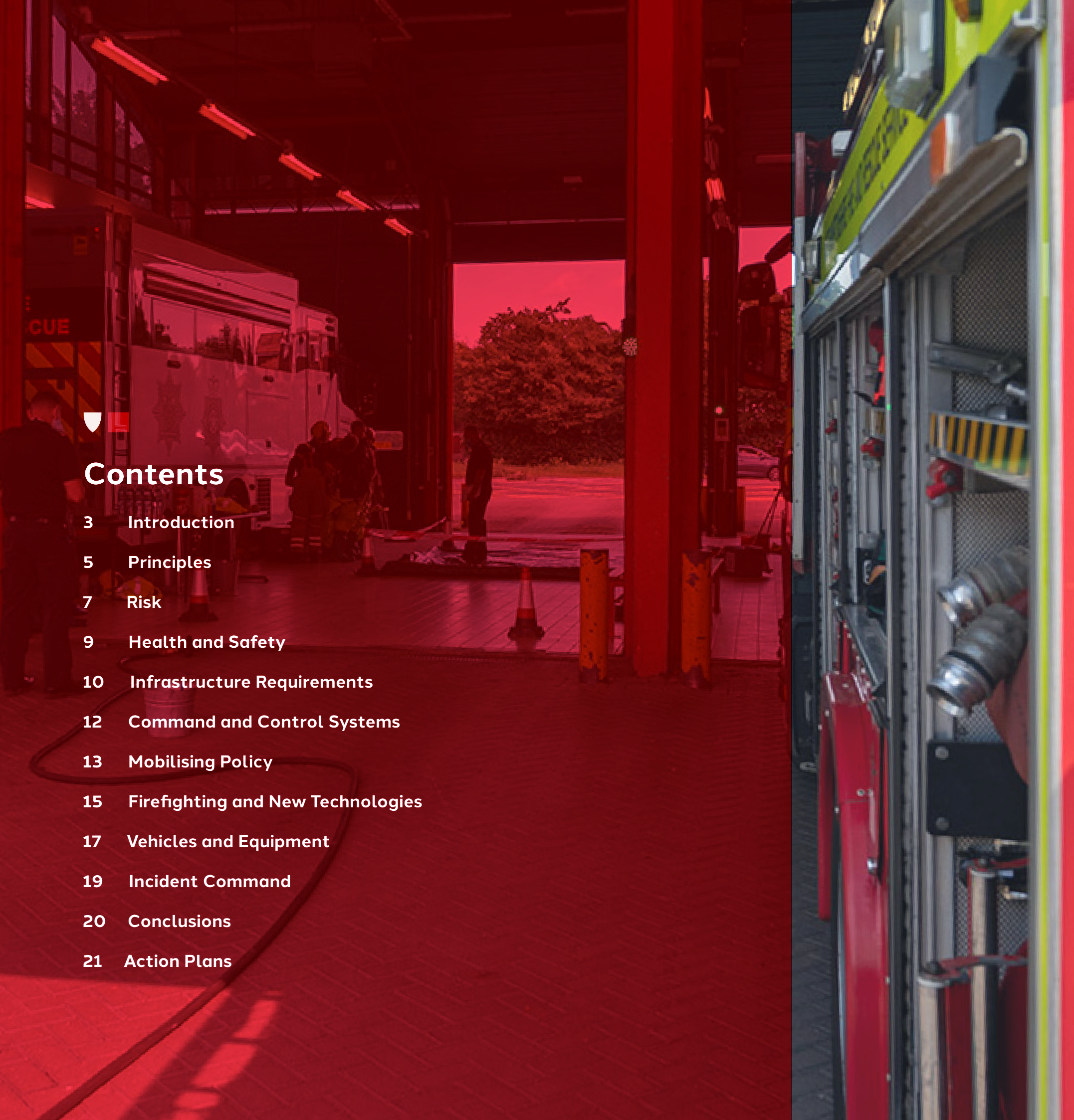


Response Strategy

2021 - 2023



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**
Making Northamptonshire Safer



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1

Introduction

In line with its statutory responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue Service’s Act 2004, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) Order 2007 and the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is committed to providing a range of response capabilities to ensure it is capable of dealing with the full range of emergencies that it could reasonably be expected to attend. These emergencies may take place within the county of Northamptonshire or outside it, and may be national or sub-national in nature, i.e. wide area flooding.

In order to achieve this response capability, NFRS will maintain a fleet of vehicles, systems and equipment to meet these expectations and also ensure that their staff are skilled and trained to use them in the circumstances that they would reasonably be expected to operate.



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Principles

NFRS has strategies for all key functions including fire prevention and protection, and focuses resources in proactive activity to put our communities first, make Northamptonshire safer and reduce the need to respond. Unfortunately, emergencies do happen; and, as such, an emergency response must be maintained.

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develop a response model that allows us to mobilise a range of vehicles, equipment and personnel in a flexible way

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The main principle behind NFRS' response strategy will be to mobilise the most appropriate resource to each emergency taking into account the incident type and the time it would take for resources to arrive. The determination of the resources mobilised will be based on having the appropriate capability to be able to deal with the immediate risk, stabilise the incident and bring it to a safe conclusion as soon as practicable.

NFRS categorises incidents according to a list of national incident types, for each incident type NFRS has risk assessed the foreseeable hazards and likely control measures. Control measures are generally tasks that involve skills and equipment used to bring an incident to a safe and swift conclusion based on previous experience and or national best practise. This process produces a Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA). Control Operators receive emergency calls and mobilise assets based on the information available to them at the time of the emergency call. As more information becomes available further resources may be mobilised at the discretion of the fire control supervisory manager prior to the arrival of the first

asset. Once on scene the first officer will take command, risk assess the situation and implement an operational plan, requesting further resources if required.

In order to achieve the optimum mobilisation NFRS will continue to develop a response model that allows us to mobilise a range of vehicles, equipment and personnel in a flexible way. This flexible response model will be 'asset based': this means it will not be based solely on the mobilisation of fire appliances in the traditional way, but on the capabilities and personnel required to: firstly, make a lifesaving intervention; and secondly, to bring the incident to a satisfactory conclusion.

To support the main principle of the 'asset-based' response strategy NFRS will locate assets around the county based on the predicted risk and demand, whilst maintaining the overall organisational capacity to deal with large scale incidents.



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Risk

Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) are organised on the basis of risk. Risk is defined as the likelihood of an event occurring multiplied by the severity of the impact, should that event occur. These risks can be generic or specific in nature. For example, a generic risk would include the type of incident that firefighters would attend on a regular basis all over the country i.e. fires in buildings or Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), whereas a specific risk would usually relate to a particular property i.e. a factory that incorporates a hazardous manufacturing process etc.

NFRS is also required to co-operate with other services and agencies within the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), in line with its responsibilities as a category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act. The LRF's main responsibilities are to ensure that local risks are assessed and that preparedness, in terms of response and recovery arrangements are in place to deal with the range of potential emergencies that could affect the county.

In order to comply with relevant legislation NFRS are required to be able to respond to this full range of risks. This includes the ability to be able to respond to incidents on a national scale and utilise the resources hosted by NFRS, which form part of the UK Governments FRS National Resilience strategy.

Another important aspect of risk is having the ability to provide risk information to our Commanders on the incident ground, to assist them in their risk critical decision making. NFRS have a risk intelligence process in place to ensure that the county's major risk sites and venues are inspected and appropriate risk information is collected. This information is then formatted and made available to Incident Commanders (ICs) via Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) on fire appliances.

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Health and Safety

As an employer, NFRS is required to be compliant with all relevant employment legislation, including Health and Safety law. The key piece of legislation in this regard, applicable to both employers and employees, is the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 (HASAWA). In addition to the HASAWA there are a number of additional Health and Safety regulations, guidelines and codes of practice that are pertinent to the work of the FRS. These seek to ensure that FRS operations and activities are carried out in such a way as to maintain the safety of both employees and the public.

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It should be recognised that fire service activities, particularly operational response, can be dangerous. In the main, because of the unpredictable and dynamic nature of emergencies, and the fact that fire service staff are often required to make decisions and act with incomplete information.

In order to overcome some of these issues it is important that FRSs have in place policies and procedures to deal with the range of incidents that they could, reasonably be expected to attend. To achieve this NFRS implement National Operational Guidance (NOG) in collaboration with the East Midlands region and other pan regional FRS partners. National Operational Guidance (NOG) is the foundation for developing operational policies, procedures and training for firefighters to deal with incidents effectively and safely. It is ‘industry good practice’ for everybody in fire and rescue services to draw on.

In addition, NFRS will continue to strive to improve its operational activities and response. In order to do this NFRS have put in place an operational assurance framework. This framework ensures that

there is a formal monitoring and review process of operational performance. This process is in line with best practise principles which in turn will allow us to put in place improvements where they are identified and required. Whilst ensuring that NFRS learns from its own activities, the operational assurance framework also takes into account learning that may be gained from events that happen in other places, both nationally and internationally.

Training and staff development is also a key element in ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of staff through safe systems of work. NFRS has a workforce plan, which, among other things, outlines how NFRS intends to plan for succession and develop its staff to meet the challenges of the operational environment. NFRS also has training management systems in place, these include defining the core, and specialist competencies that firefighters and officers are expected to fulfil in order to ensure they have the requisite skills to deal with incidents in a safe manner.



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Infrastructure Requirements

NFRS is a strategic service designed to meet the needs of the whole of the county. It is therefore important that our infrastructure requirements are based on that strategic requirement. This means that whilst fire stations are locality based, they each support and form part of a countywide response capability.

Traditionally fire stations have been built in the areas where the most fires occur, predominantly in the county's major towns and large villages. Over time societal risk has changed, as has the legislation governing FRS's; for example: the increase in and requirement to attend road traffic collisions; the growing environmental and flooding risks; as well as preparedness for pandemics and terrorist incidents. Due to the increasing range of incidents attended, the need for a more integrated emergency response, and the growth and development of the county, there is a need to ensure that the strategic needs of the Service, in relation to the infrastructure required to meet our emergency response obligations, is recognised. Therefore, NFRS will utilise information about the county's development and growth, together with its risk modelling software,

to determine the most appropriate location for our assets, this process is comprehensively reviewed every three to five years as part of updates to NFRS' Community Risk Management Plan and the Commissioners Fire Plan.

The location of assets is determined by risk rather than demand. The aim being; that when called upon, resources are mobilised in a timely and efficient manner without negatively impacting likely outcomes. Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service recognises that specified attendance times cannot be achieved on all occasions but will ensure resources are strategically located to minimise risk; as such NFRS has a strategic target to respond to all emergency incidents within an average of 10 minutes.

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Command and Control Systems

To ensure that NFRS is able to meet the principles set out in this response strategy, we have invested in a command and control system and have reciprocal and fall-back arrangements to ensure resilience with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service. This system enhances our ability to answer calls more quickly and respond to emergencies in a more flexible way. The system operates by being able to calculate the time it would take for a resource to arrive at an incident by utilising road routing information together with Automatic Vehicle Location Systems (AVLS), a feature that allows the mobilising system to predict the most suitable available asset.



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...in accordance with the designated incident types as determined by our Control Operators

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Mobilising Policy

NFRS's Operational Response Mobilising policy provides comprehensive information and business rules detailing how assets are mobilised, in line with the principles set out in this strategy. Currently, this is in accordance with the designated incident types as determined by our Control Operators, which in itself is determined by the information available to them at the time of the 999 call.

These incident types are a defined list and are based on work carried out nationally by FRSs working in collaboration. In all there are around 90 generic incident types. Each of these incident types has attached to it a PDA. The PDA is the pre-set number and type of assets that will be mobilised to an incident immediately on receipt of a call for assistance.

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Firefighting And New Technologies

Along with other FRs, NFRS has historically applied traditional firefighting methods in order to resolve operational incidents. This generally included the ability to be able to fight fires from both the inside and outside of premises.

In order to fight fires from the inside of buildings firefighters are required to wear Breathing Apparatus (BA) and to be trained to understand the behaviour of fire in compartments. Fighting fire from the inside of buildings is extremely hazardous.

Over the last ten years a number of firefighters have been killed on duty fighting fires in this way; therefore, NFRS is actively working to exploit new technology in order to enhance both its firefighting capability and the safety of firefighters. Exploiting new technology will not completely replace traditional firefighting methods; however, it will provide alternative tactical options that can be employed by ICs.

This new technology includes for example, the use of: drones, ultra-high pressure (UHP) extinguishing systems and smoke hoods. UHP allows the Service to fight a fire in a compartment without the need to commit firefighters into that

“As a result of learning from the Grenfell Towers incident in London, fire escape hoods are now available on all frontline assets.”

compartment. To complement the UHP technology NFRS have developed new firefighting methodologies by bringing together a range of new technologies. This includes the use of Thermal Imaging Cameras (TICs), Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) and UHP. As a result of learning from the Grenfell Towers incident in London, fire escape hoods are now available on all frontline assets. They can be deployed to members of the public who would otherwise be unable to escape buildings due to the presence of smoke, or fire generated harmful gases.

NFRS aim to embed this methodology across the Service, which will enhance its knowledge and capability in tactical firefighting, and increase the tactical options available to Incident Commanders in their duty to deal with incidents in a safe and effective manner.



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Vehicles and Equipment

In addition to the new technologies outlined in section 9, NFRS will also review its fleet and equipment requirements in order to ensure it has the right vehicles and equipment to deal with local risks and organisational resilience.

NFRS currently has a fleet of 28 fire appliances, 26 traditional appliances plus 2 Combined Aerial Rescue Pumps (CARPs), based at the 22 fire stations in the county. At present these appliances are built to carry largely similar equipment. In addition to these appliances NFRS also has a range of specialist vehicles and equipment to provide a range of core and specialist capabilities. NFRS has a strategic target to achieve a minimum of 14 fire engines available at all times with an optimum of 18.

NFRS will also implement further trials of different appliances in order to evaluate their suitability and contribution to the response strategy. This includes trialling different fire appliances designed to better match the risk in the geographical area in which they predominantly operate in addition to supporting the strategic requirement.

In regard to equipment, NFRS will evaluate its requirements based on the lifecycle of equipment as defined in the fleet or asset management strategy. Where equipment is due for renewal, evaluations, including, where appropriate, trials, will take place in order to identify the most appropriate replacement.

NFRS will continue to support the health, safety and welfare of operational staff with personal protective equipment that meets the foreseeable risks associated with our emergency response capabilities. The current PPE provision has recently been extended to include a rescue jacket. The rescue jacket is lighter and less restrictive than the more traditional structural firefighting jacket, improving the welfare of operational staff whilst maintaining their safety during non-structural firefighting emergencies.

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Incident Command

Incident command is an integral part of the Service's response strategy and key to ensuring that the Service's response to emergencies is effective, whilst ensuring the safety of its personnel.

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NFRS will adhere to the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) and also the National Operational Guidance (NOG) on incident command as developed through NOG. Both JESIP and NOG set out a full set of principles and procedures for incident command, that are scalable depending on the size, type and complexity of incident attended, including incidents that require either a multi-agency response or where a national response is required.

The FRS nationally, have in place a competency framework for incident command and have identified four levels. NFRS will adopt this framework and utilise it to train, assess and mobilise its ICs.

In order to assist ICs in their decision making NFRS will ensure that it maintains its ability to mobilise officers with specialist capabilities in order that ICs have all the specialist advice they require for command decisions to be taken. These include such capabilities as National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILOs), Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection Advisers (HMEPAs), access to scientific support, Fire Investigation Officers (FIOs), Fire Protection Officers (FPOs), flood managers, water rescue advisers, large animal rescue advisers etc.



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Conclusions

This document sets out the strategy for operational response for NFRS over the next 3 years, and will be reviewed in line with the next Fire Plan and CRMP. Asset based mobilisation strategy aims to move from a response based on the mobilisation of fire appliances, to a response where the quickest and most appropriate asset is mobilised. This is designed to improve outcomes both in terms of speed of response as well as improved firefighter & community safety giving us the ability to deal with incidents in a more safe, efficient and effective manner.



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Action Plans

In order to ensure that NFRS are able to meet the demands of the future, taking into account both national and local risk as well as a growing county, NFRS is routinely review its CRMP. CRMP reviews will typically consider the NFRS response arrangements to ensure that they continue to meet the emerging risks and growth within Northamptonshire and our commitment to the national response strategy.



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