



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**



Community Risk Management Plan

Update and Review 2023

Our Community Risk Management Plan

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Executive Summary

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) is the Fire Authority for Northamptonshire and is required through the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England to produce a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to identify risks within the county and outline its plan for mitigating these risks and keeping residents safe.

The CRMP, which was published in 2022, outlines our plan to keep people, homes, communities and the environment safe until 2025. The plan sits alongside the Commissioner's Police, Fire and Crime Plan and the Chief Fire Officer's Vision 25.

In this document we provide an update on what we said we would do, the progress we have made and our performance in the first year of our three-year CRMP.

The CRMP provides an overview of the risks faced within the county and shows how Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is working to mitigate those risks. Not only is the plan developed based on county issues, but also considers wider influences such as the cost-of-living

crisis and changes and decisions made in central Government.

Since publishing our CRMP last year, the Fire Service has seen a period of unease with the potential industrial action during the negotiations around firefighter pay. This had a significant impact on NFRS, as contingency plans were required to ensure the Service was able to provide the availability and cover needed to respond to incidents effectively and efficiently.

Significant revenue investment has been made since governance moved from the County Council to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, and the revenue budget is now £7m more (30%) than at the time of the governance transfer. Reserves have been built from a nil balance at the time of the governance transfer to a reasonable, but not excessive level. Over £10m has been provided to support capital investment programmes for Fire Fleet, Estates, Digital and Operational Equipment.

Whilst Northamptonshire is still lower funded than many of our peers in the national funding settlement, following the governance transfer, all council tax and other funding for Fire



is now 100% allocated to Fire.

Despite this progress, with high levels of inflation and the cost of living, balancing the budget over the medium term, is a challenge. We have a medium term financial plan and efficiency savings are identified, and we are constantly reviewing resources and risks to prioritise our activities and ensure that we make best use of the funding available to us.

We continue to target those people who are most at risk and work closely with partners to understand and highlight vulnerable people and implement safeguarding measures to protect those individuals; this risk has become more complex since the cost-of-living crisis and with the increase of refugees and asylum seekers to the county.

At the time of the governance transfer, most vehicles in our fleet had reached, or were reaching end of life, so we have invested in next generation vehicles, to ensure our firefighters have the best possible equipment to keep the county safe. By 2024, over 40% of the operational fire tender fleet will

have been replaced and a significant investment this year was the purchase of a new aerial appliance with a 42-metre turntable ladder that will enhance the Service's ability to operate at height. It also helps us to futureproof the safety of the county as we see large scale residential and commercial developments right across Northamptonshire.

There has been significant investment in operational equipment at all stations, for example in new foam, new improved gas monitors, new energy efficient LED lighting, new Halmatro RTC equipment and new backpacks for wildfires are currently being allocated to stations.

After increasing the establishment by 12 whole time firefighters, a workforce plan is now in place. We welcomed 12 new fulltime firefighters last year and a further 12 are commencing on stations in August 2023. We are actively encouraging new applicants from diverse communities as part of our recruitment drive so that the Service is as representative of the demographics in county as possible.

What we said and what we did

In our CRMP 2022-25, we introduced three major workstreams to be delivered, all of which focus on organisational learning and continuous improvement.

Three major workstreams

1

Emergency Cover Review

To review our data and current resources and ensure that our emergency response is well equipped to respond to current and emerging risks in the county.

2

Adapt to climate change

To review our data and current resources to inform recommendations to improve our response to environmental risk, such as flooding and wildfires and ensure that we have the right skills and resources in place.

3

Review our current data and intelligence

Invest in new technology and work with partner organisations to enhance our understanding of risk and our service delivery to drive performance improvements.



1

Emergency Cover Review

In June 2022, NFRS commissioned an independent consultant to review operational resilience and wider organisational effectiveness. The overall objective is to review the current levels of demand of the Service, the current and emerging risks and our response to incidents and then to provide evidence to recommend potential changes to improve and futureproof the Service.

Following the initial review work undertaken during 2022, the next phase will look to develop detailed recommendations. The outcome of this work will be presented during 2023/24 and will inform the future service needs, ensuring we have the right facilities, equipment and skills to respond to current and emerging risks.

The Emergency Cover Review followed a data-driven methodology, which involved the following processes:

- Collecting incident, workload and resourcing data from NFRS
- Analysing data to examine the current service profile, response performance and the dwelling fire risk (as defined by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) methodology)
- Using specialist software with real data from NFRS to simulate service response, to assess risk and optimise appliance and personnel deployment at a variety of incidents
- Assessing potential options for NFRS to change and improve service delivery



2

Adapt to climate change

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) is committed to ensuring that both Fire and Police fleet, estates and processes meet the Government's carbon targets.

A thorough review of the Fire estate has been undertaken and recommendations have been made that will ensure our facilities are sustainable, more environmentally friendly and have a lesser reliance on fossil fuels.

Our fleet has also been reviewed and we have already installed telematics into our vehicles to help understand how they are used and to inform our future fleet needs and vehicle replacement programme.

Climate change also impacts the operational incidents we attend. We are responding to an increasing number of flooding incidents and with warmer and drier weather conditions, we anticipate more wildfires in the county. Summer 2022 serves as an example of this; the driest year in England since 1976 and joint warmest on record*. As a result, we experienced a significant increase in demand, specifically peaking during July and August 2022 where we saw a 76% increase in wildfire incidents and a 59% increase in all incidents during that same period.

This unprecedented summer of wildfires has already informed several changes to our response processes and to the equipment needed to attend these weather-related incidents in the future. Recommendations are already being rolled out, such as the development of new training materials, a new risk profile for large open rural areas that could be affected by wildfires and new equipment to assist with fighting such fires. The recent introduction of wildfire backpacks on every frontline appliance has already proven a valuable investment, having been used at four incidents in the first few weeks. The backpacks can carry up to 20 litres of water and can be used in areas that are inaccessible for a fire engine.

The roll out of other recommendations will be completed by the end of 2023 and evaluated during 2024. In the longer term, this and future reviews will inform our fleet and equipment capital programme.

*for England, according to mean temperature and based on provisional data in Sept 2022.

MET Office
Joint hottest summer on record for England

3

Review our current data and intelligence

There has been considerable investment in our infrastructure and technology to lay the foundation for further improvement. A Digital Data and Technology Team (DDaT) has been created for Fire, Police and the Office of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. This brings together analysis and support functions aligning with the plans set out in the Government's 2022 – 2025 Roadmap for Digital and Data to transform digital public services.

The overall objective is to apply a data driven approach to the current and future risk profiles within the county and to Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service and assess potential options for ongoing improvements. The investment in technology will enable us to gather broader data and intelligence and ensure that any decisions made about future priorities for the service are evidence-based.



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We will continue to invest in technology to enhance our effectiveness and seek continual improvements to ensure that the Service is adaptable and responsive to emerging risks and is fit for the future.

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► Focus on Collaboration

Working together is at our core; from the incident ground where we work with other blue light services responding to emergencies, through our Prevention and Protection teams working with partner agencies, to our organisational commitment to work with Northamptonshire Police when it makes sense to do so. Below are examples of where we are working together:

Working with partners

The service continues to work with our partners to learn from and embed recommendations from public inquiries. Since the Grenfell Inquiry, we work closely with building providers, developers, and management companies to minimise the risk of fire. The Manchester Arena Inquiry has set out a number of recommendations for first responders to consider, in order to provide a more effective response in the event of a similar incident. NFRS is leading a working group in collaboration with Local Resilience Forum partners to consider recommendations and deliver improvements based on the feedback and evidence in the three reports relating to the inquiry.

Integrated Care System

In April 2022, new legislation created an Integrated Care System (ICS), establishing a new structure that brings together relevant partners to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in an area. We are working with ICS partners to assist with early identification of frailty and falls risk through our Home Fire Safety Visit referral pathways.

We are working with the ICS Place Based Delivery Boards to help problem solve and target ICS resources effectively, with the aim of reducing the need for medical and social care services.

Collaborative approach

We are working with the two, unitary local authorities through the Health and Wellbeing Boards, Community Safety Partnerships and Safeguarding Boards, sharing data, learning and resources to keep communities of Northamptonshire safe and well. For example, we are actively collaborating with partners, to ensure that safety advice is given to those people arriving under migration and resettlement programmes and those using Warm Spaces.

► Focus on People and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services

We received the results of our second His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection in July 2022, which saw improvements in our ratings for efficiency and effectiveness. The inspectorate identified more work to do on the 'people' area. It found that improvement is needed to promote the right values, ensuring fairness and encouraging diversity. Following the feedback, the Service is prioritising continued work in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, to ensure that NFRS is inclusive, supportive and an employer of choice.

HMICFRS spotlight report

In March 2023, HMICFRS published a spotlight report that made 35 recommendations and explored this as an area of improvement for the whole sector.

Service improvements

We are committed to bringing about improvements at NFRS. Work has already started by implementing a programme of immediate measures during 2022, which included the launch of new reporting mechanisms for inappropriate behaviour, the review of historical disciplinarys and reviewing policies to identify learning and improve processes.

Serving with Pride

We have launched an internal campaign called Serving with Pride, which celebrates what we do well as a Service and will address areas that we need to improve. A comprehensive piece of research and engagement with staff has already been carried out and responses and feedback are currently being reviewed. Results will be available in the autumn.

► Focus on Finance

Fire funding has increased significantly since the governance transfer and is now 30% higher than the budget transferred from the County Council. The PFCC has undertaken proactive lobbying of MPs, the Home Office and Ministers, which has enabled him to increase the council tax precept at a higher level than inflation two years running.

The PFCC has lobbied extensively to secure additional funding for the county and in the past four years, over £5m in one off grants has been obtained, covering areas such as COVID support, one off support for the revenue budget, reserves and the capital programme.

Capital investment

Over £10m has been provided to support capital investment in Fire Fleet, Estates, Digital and Operational Equipment. A five-year capital programme is in place, informed by operational plans and regularly reviewed and monitored. The PFCC is committed to sharing buildings and services where it makes sense to do so across Police and Fire and a Joint Estates Strategy is already in place across Fire and Policing and is being reviewed and updated during 2023.

Financial stability

As no reserves transferred as part of the Fire Governance transfer in January 2019, a three year financial stability plan was established and was achieved earlier than anticipated. In fact, by March 2023 almost £4.5m was held in general and earmarked reserves to support investment and meet unforeseen circumstances. This is a reasonable, but not excessive, level of reserves that is compliant with financial guidelines.

Reserves strategy

In 2021/22 HMICFRS Effectiveness, Efficiency and People Inspection report, the progress made following the governance transfer was recognised: “the service has used the change in governance arrangements to stabilise its financial position, both now and in the future. It has removed significant financial instability and has clear plans in place to provide an affordable fire and rescue service, while establishing a reserves strategy and capital funding to make essential investments.”

Despite the good progress, Northamptonshire is still one of the lowest funded Fire and Rescue Authorities in the Country, with a population increasing at a faster rate than the average for England and Wales. It is essential that Fire funding keeps pace with this change and the challenge to secure a fair Fire funding settlement for the county will continue.

► Focus on our Performance

To track our progress in delivering community outcomes, we consider our Community Outcome Measures as part of our regular performance management. Through this process we gather and analyse performance data to help inform change; undertaking further work to better understand demand and delivery outcomes to help direct our resources effectively and appropriately. Through this work, we identified an increase in deliberate fires during 2022/23 and implemented a range of prevention, engagement and education activities to address this additional demand.

Working with Northamptonshire Police to combine our data and intelligence, we were able to undertake more in-depth analysis, which has identified potential links to anti-social behaviour and mental health issues. These are currently being explored further.

Additional work continues by gathering and analysing more detailed geographical data. Work is being delivered as part of a Joint Arson Reduction Delivery Plan, which involves collaborative work with partners. This complements the number of seasonal campaigns raising awareness of the risk of deliberate fire setting and reducing risk to the people of Northamptonshire.



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Progress against our Community Outcome Measures can be found in the latest annual Fire and Rescue Statement
<https://www.northantsfire.gov.uk/publication-of-information/>

Annual Fire and Rescue Statement

We regularly publish performance data on our website
<https://www.northantsfire.gov.uk/our-performance-2/>

Performance Data



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