

Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2025/26

April 2025



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

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Foreword

As we launch our Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2025/26, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is committed to delivering the best possible services to the communities we serve, and we recognise that this requires constant attention to operational performance and financial sustainability.

This Efficiency and Productivity Plan sets out a range of activities designed to enhance the service we provide.



We are committed to embracing new ways of working, identifying efficiencies, and driving positive change across the organisation. This plan also needs to be flexible and adaptable due to the timing of this plan with our current consultation on our Community Risk Management Plan and our Standards of Operational Response. We also recognise, like many other public sector partners, that the uncertainty about our financial future requires us to be agile and adaptable in our approach, and therefore, we have developed a plan that puts us in a positive position to meet any challenges that lie ahead but also ensure we continue to drive delivery against the Commissioner's Safe and Sound Plan.

Looking towards the future with positivity, we know that we have committed and skilled staff across the Service who can help us deliver our vision. We are confident that by working together and focusing our efforts on delivering results, we can continue to drive improvements in productivity and efficiency while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and quality.

The Efficiency and Productivity Plan is an important tool for NFRS, but it is more than just a document. It is a statement of our commitment to putting the communities we serve first and at the centre of everything we do. It is also, an affirmation of our dedication to the people who make our organisation what it is today. We must work together to make this plan a reality and to ensure that NFRS continues to be a Service that our communities can rely on to keep them safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nikki Watson'.

Nikki Watson
Chief Fire Officer

Introduction

This Productivity and Efficiency Plan sets out the ongoing financial challenge currently faced by the Service and illustrates the recent transformation savings that have been delivered by the Service.

The Fire and Rescue [National Framework](#) sets a requirement that Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) produce and publish annual efficiency plans. There is a specific requirement from the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire that in 2024/25, FRAs produce plans that not only cover planned efficiencies, but also their plans for increasing productivity.

As part of the 2021/22 Spending Review, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) proposed that across Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in England, the fire and rescue sector could create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3% by 2024/25. This Productivity and Efficiency Plan will help the NFCC, LGA and Home Office to collate evidence and to assess likely progress at national level against the agreed spending review goals. It is published on the Fire and Rescue Service website so that it can be scrutinised by local people and taxpayers in Northamptonshire.

The Service's strategy for the provision of services is driven by the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). At the publishing date of this 2025/26 document, the Service is consulting on the new CRMP. This new version and the existing published version, have both been developed using integrated risk management planning methods and are designed to conform to the Government's guidance in relation to the preparation of integrated risk management plans.

The published CRMP covering the period 2022-2025 can be found as per the link: [Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's Community Risk Management Plan for the period 2022-25 \(northantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.northantsfire.gov.uk/northamptonshire-fire-and-rescue-service-community-risk-management-plan-2022-25)

The draft new CRMP covering the period 2025-2030 can be found as per the link: [Draft Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\) 2025-30](#)

The Community Risk Management Plan and this Productivity and Efficiency Plan is supported by the approved Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which sets out how the Service will fund the plan. The MTFP is based on a number of assumptions, which are detailed within this document. It should be noted that whilst this plan has been drafted alongside the current draft CRMP, should any changes be necessary an update version shall be published.

This document contains links to other relevant documents and websites and should be read in conjunction with those.

Part 1: Primary Information - Budget & Income

Financial Context

Fire Governance transferred from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) on 1 April 2019, and the organisation became Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority as at that date.

The historical financial challenges at Northamptonshire County Council were well known. Northamptonshire Fire had not been immune to the challenges whilst under NCC governance and had been subject to significant efficiency savings requirements for some years which seriously impacted on the ability to deliver effective Fire services within the county.

As such, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue transferred with no reserves, no capital programme and a minimal revenue budget which had been subject to austerity for some years.

The governance transfer was predicated on a three-year financial stability plan to build reserves, implement a capital programme and go some way to establishing a resilient revenue budget. This included building in extra costs to provide support structures and other professional services costs required to service a separate organisation. Following support from the Home Office for council tax flexibility, these stability targets were achieved by the end of 2021/22.

However, whilst Fire has a more resilient base budget, the challenges are not over, and with inflation and cost pressures significantly higher than funding assumptions, further efficiency savings are required to balance the budget over the medium term. Given the historic budget cuts already made to Fire during NCC governance, and with an already lean revenue budget, there are fewer opportunities to realise efficiencies than other services, let alone from non-staff budgets. In fact, the requirement has been to invest in key areas to build resilience and ensure delivery of effective services.

With increasing financial pressures, this plan aims to support our strategic priorities and identify areas where we can make efficient use of our resources while maintaining the highest standard of service delivery. Through effective budgeting, resource allocation and proactive measures to identify cost-saving opportunities, we aim to improve our financial efficiency without compromising on delivering our vision and mission.

BUDGET (£000)			
Revenue Expenditure	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2025/ 2026
Direct Employee	20,497	21,653	24,521
Indirect Employee	4,016	5,291	4,875
Premises	1,559	2,088	2,264
Transport	536	609	596
Supplies and Services	3,515	3,822	4,594
Capital Financing	444	618	892
Other	7	(1,423)	(2,104)
Total	30,574	32,658	35,638
Income	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2025/ 2026
Actual Received from Precept	(19,019)	(19,804)	(21,413)
Local Government Finance Settlement	(6,546)	(6,875)	(6,884)
Other Grants	(3,993)	(4,775)	(5,426)
Income Raised Locally	(1,016)	(1,204)	(1,915)
Total	(30,574)	(32,658)	(35,638)

RESERVES (£000)					
	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2025/ 2026	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028
General Reserves	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Earmarked Revenue Reserves	2,312	2,784	2,118	1,718	1,616
of which MRP reserve					
Earmarked Capital Reserves	732	1,968	0	0	0
Other Reserves					
of which revenue					
of which capital					
Total	5,044	6,752	4,118	3,718	3,616

Precept

Northamptonshire Fire's Band D properties precept has increased by £5 from 2024/25 to 2025/26, which across the county equates to an uplift of 6.6% for NFRS. However, the increase in income of £1.3m is not enough to offset the financial challenges the service faced in total.

Alongside the increase in precept, the number of dwellings has also increased. However, as the grant funding formula fails to take into account Northamptonshire's above average increase in demand that these new homes bring, the effective amount per dwelling reduces. Around a third of the services funding comes from grant and are thus impacted by this issue.

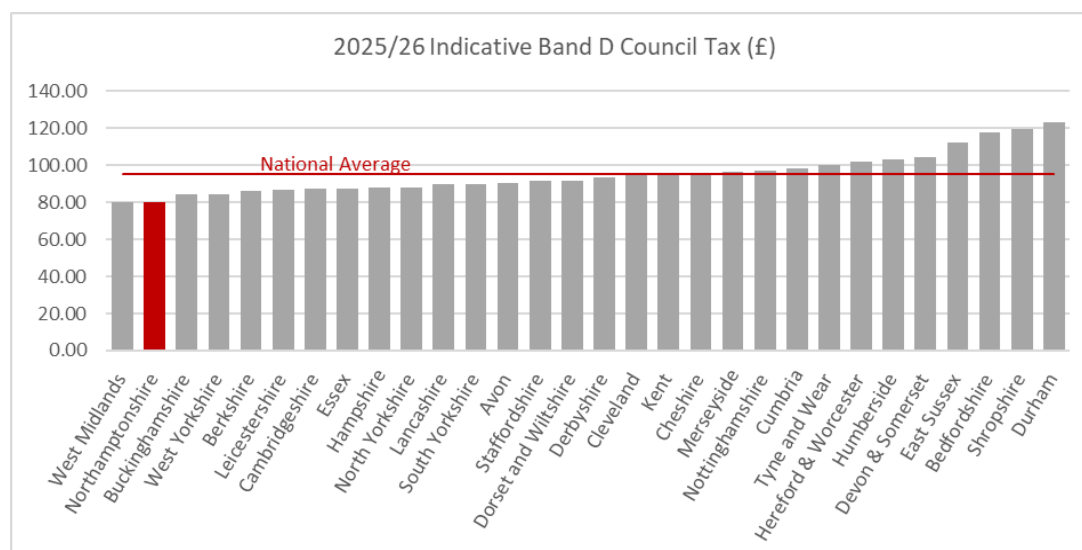
The amount of funding from precept compared to last year and forecast into the future is as follows:

	Precept changes		
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Band D Council Tax rate	£75.39	£80.39	£82.89
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total Precept Base	19,489	21,202	22,189
Total Surplus/ (Deficit) Precept	315	211	100
Total Precept	19,804	21,413	22,289

Assumptions:

Annual Increase (%)	2.99%	6.63%	3.11%
Annual Increase (£)	£2.19	£5.00	£2.50

Band D Council Tax levels for Fire and Rescue Authorities will range between £80.20 in the West Midlands and £123.12 in Durham, with an average of £95.32 per standalone Band D property (as compared to £90.32 in 2024/25), which gives rise to Northamptonshire being second poorest funded precepting fire body in the country, as demonstrated as follows:



Efficiency

EFFICIENCY DATA (£000)						
	Actual 2023/24		Actual 2024/25		Forecast 2025/26	
Opening Revenue Expenditure Budget (Net)	29,558		31,454		33,723	
Less Total Direct Employee Costs	20,497		21,653		24,521	
Non Pay Budget	9,061		9,801		9,202	
Efficiency Target (2% of non-pay budget)	(181)		(196)		(184)	
Efficiency Savings	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent
<u>Direct Employee</u>						
Reduction in Prevention/Protection/Response Staff	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reduction in Support Staff	239	-	296	87	328	-
<u>Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)</u>						
All Indirect Employee Costs	214	445	218	278	262	424
<u>Premises</u>						
Utilities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rent/Rates	29	-	30	-	30	-
Other Premises Costs	103	-	130	-	132	-
Shared Premises	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Transport</u>						
Fleet	10	-	10	-	11	-
Fuel	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Transport Costs	20	-	20	-	21	-
<u>Supplies and Services</u>						
National Procurement Savings	-	-	-	-	-	-
Local Procurement Savings	86	-	112	65	242	-
Other Technology Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decreased Usage	23	39	23	60	74	-
<u>Capital Financing</u>						
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Borrowing Costs	-	-	-	50	-	248
<u>Other</u>						
Potential rationalisation of contingency funds based on needs assessment	-	-	-	-	-	206
Total Efficiency Savings	1,207		1,380		1,977	
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets	13.32%		14.08%		21.49%	
Efficiency Savings Target	2.00%		2.00%		2.00%	
Over/(Under)	11.32%		12.08%		19.49%	

Income

INCOME (£000)						
Income Generated from:	Actual 2023/24		Actual 2024/25		Forecast 2025/26	
	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent
Charging policies		341		418		587
Trading operations		188		137		91
Shared premises	259		167		142	
Interest on investments	238		389		83	
Other sources	0		0		0	
Total	497	529	555	555	224	678

Direct Employee

Recurrent

In 2024/25 there was £0.296m of staff savings of which £0.057m was an increase on the savings achieved in 2023/24, this includes:

- £0.005m of inflation avoided from increases in staff post that have been removed.
- £0.052m from removing two roles from a more effective way of working.

Non-recurrent

One off savings of £0.47m of savings were achieved through:

- £0.087m from covering vacancies through cross working.
- £0.12m from changing the rank profile within the operational team to meet demand.
- £0.263m from the reduction in budgeted costs from the reduction in planned recruitment above established roles.

Indirect Employee

Recurrent

In 2024/25 there was £0.004m of savings which related to the avoided increases in inflation on indirect expenditure that has been avoided from 2023/24 savings.

Non-recurrent

£0.661m of one off savings were achieved as a result of:

- £0.101m from the reduction in the associated charges for ill health retirement.
- £0.163m from the utilisation of the apprenticeship co-funding initiative, this will be continued as the opportunities allow.
- £0.014m from the reduction in personal mileage and the better utilisation of service assets.

Premises

Recurrent

In 2024/25 there was:

- £0.001m and £0.003m of savings which related to the avoided increases in inflation on indirect expenditure that has been avoided from 2023/24 savings.
- £0.025m from reviewing the annual maintenance plan and removing non-essential works.

Transport

There has been no increase in savings achieved in this area, we are expecting savings from the improvement in efficiency from the oncoming fleet replacement.

Supplies and Services

Recurrent

In 2024/25 there was:

- £0.002m of savings which related to the avoided increases in inflation on indirect expenditure that has been avoided from 2023/24 savings.
- £0.025m from the renegotiation of IT licensing costs.

Non-recurrent

£0.125m of one off savings were achieved as a result of:

- A review of the contracted costs of goods and services received by the service was completed, which allowed for the in-year reduction in supply.
- A £0.06m of savings were achieved as a result of avoiding the interim replacement of equipment whilst asset lives were temporarily extended and the overall volume of replacements was analysed and reduced.

Capital Financing

Recurrent

No recurring savings were made

Non-recurrent

£0.05m of one-off savings were achieved as a result of reducing the capital cost charged to the revenue account.

Other

No other savings were achieved.

Future Efficiencies

Work is under way to look at the future long-term strategy of the service and it is expected that better resource management and utilisation will enable more effective operational coverage of the County and therefore a reduction in associated usage costs and the rationalisation of assets that are surplus to requirements.

Collaboration

The sharing of resources across Enabling Services has ensured that access to specialised resources have been able to be shared and the use maximised across both Fire and Police, this includes:

- Technical IT related skills, such as Enterprise Architecture.
- Information Assurance, including data protection and advice.
- Specialist performance and demand resources have been shared, which includes the cross organisational learnings which have been able to be embedded within both organisations.
- Commercial, including procurement resources have been further shared to ensure the compliance with the national changes to procurement regulations and have been noted as promising areas of practise.
- Organisational Development and cultural change, which is seeking to embed cultural change and improvements.

Assessment of Efficiencies

NFRS has continued to deliver efficiencies in excess of the minimum requirement. However, the focus has continued to be on the current financial year given the short term financial settlements and the ongoing review of the organisational Service delivery plan.

Once the service has published and defined its future operational plan, the funding formula has been reviewed and replaced and there is a medium-term financial settlement, it is imperative that planning is moved further ahead to ensure the optimal use of resources and deliver a higher percentage of recurrent rather than one-off savings.

The Continuous Improvement Board has been put in place to bring all of these areas together and will ensure that all strands from across the Service and its Enabling Services are aligned in the delivery of its objectives and priorities.

Part 2: Secondary Information - Efficiency & Productivity

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

HMICFRS conducted their third full inspection of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in March 2024 and published their report on 18 September 2024. The report is available on the HMICFRS [website](#).

The inspection demonstrates our commitment to deliver excellent services to the communities of Northamptonshire. We were graded as *Good* in “Making the FRS affordable now and in the future”, and *Adequate* in “Making best use of resources”. The Inspectors said that “there are some good foundations in place and sound financial planning” – and that it is important that NFRS now moves ahead with those plans.

Collaboration

Strategic Priorities 2025-3030

Collaboration with partners and organisations can help NFRS improve efficiencies and productivity by maximising resources, avoiding duplication, improving communication, and fostering innovation. As set out in the 2025-2030 CRMP, NFRS is committed to explore and further develop existing co-responding and partnership working opportunities.



Shared Services and Resources

Enabling Services

NFRS collaborates with Northamptonshire Police in the provision of an Enabling Services function, which delivers a shared support service function as listed earlier in this document. Each department has its own business case and funding arrangements, ranging from 13% to 40% for fire (averaging out to c. 20% for the whole collaboration costs for fire).

Fire Control Partnership

NFRS also shares infrastructure with Warwickshire in respect of the Command and Control technology which enables a joint procurement and also provides failover across each FRS. This makes it possible to operate as one control room on two sites.

Operational Capabilities

Fire Welfare Pod is a shared facility across Police, Fire and Local Government Agencies.

Mobile Joint Command Unit (JCU) – shared asset across Northants Police and Fire. This also supports Local Resilience Forum partners and has been shared across border.

Emergency Service Cadets

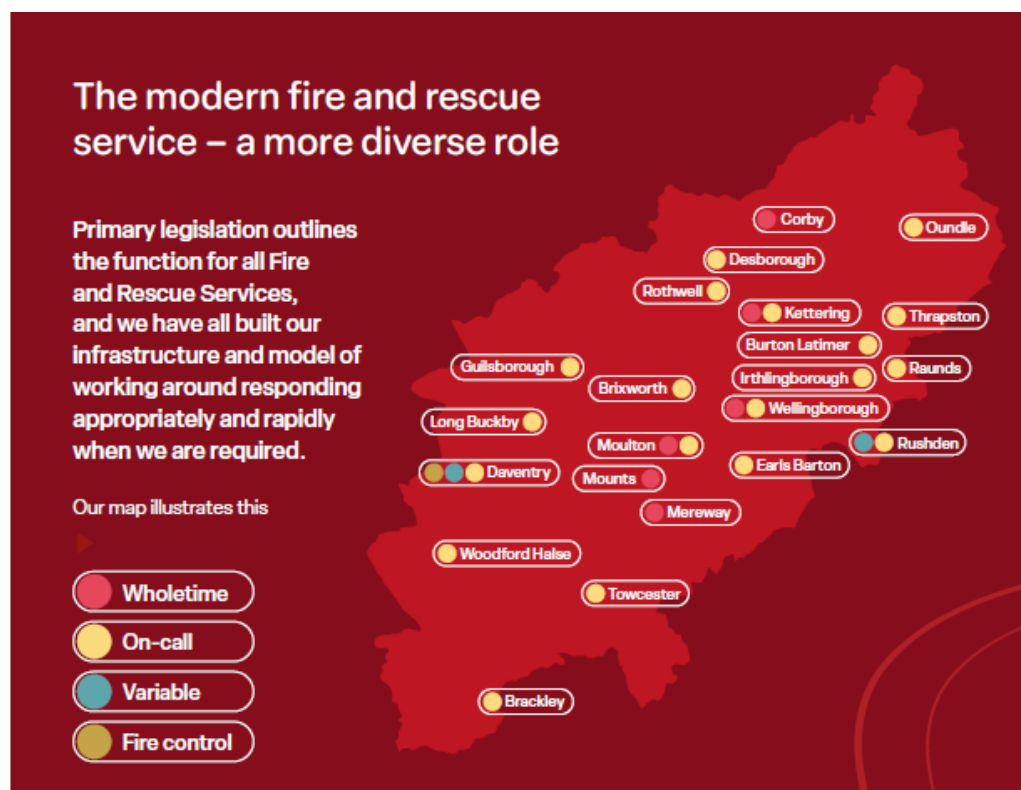
The joint Northamptonshire Emergency Service Cadets Scheme (NESC) runs to engage with young people aged 13-18 in a Blue Light Service curriculum supported by Police, Fire and Ambulance Service. Cadets learn about JESIP principles and volunteer their time to support multi-agency exercises and also community engagement work, post serious incident and for Prevention. The Fire learning modules work links to the UK Fire Cadets curriculum, whilst the Police modules link to the Voluntary Police Cadets programme. Through NESC we maximise the capacity from over 200 young people to support our community-based work.

Youth engagement

NFRS undertook a joint procurement with partners to deliver resources to support early intervention youth programmes following securing £9k funding via the Serious Violence Duty grant.

Shared Premises

NFRS utilises 25 sites, 22 are Fire Stations. Six of the stations are 'Wholetime,' meaning they are crewed 24/7 by full-time firefighters. A further two are crewed full-time from Monday to Friday, known as 'Variable Crewing,' while the remaining 14 stations are 'On-Call' meaning they have On-Call firefighters who will respond to incidents when alerted. Three Fire Stations have a shared premises commitment. In addition, NFRS has two shared office-based premises with Northamptonshire Police. NFRS estates are also shared with community groups and Telecommunications Services.



Asset Management and IT Investment

Strategic Priorities 2025-2030

We have already started to address some of our challenges, investing significantly in our assets, modernising our digital infrastructure and laying a secure foundation for advanced systems that better meet our needs. NFRS has committed, as set out in the 2025-2030 CRMP, to continue to explore and further drive efficiencies and productivity through our Asset Management and IT investments.

Sustainability and resilience

We will manage and invest in our service to be agile and fit for the future. Using our resources sustainably and productively while delivering the most value.

- 1 We will take a digital first approach to ensure we deliver solutions that maximise productivity and effectiveness, using data to provide critical business insights which will enable us to focus our services on those who need it most.
- 3 We will develop a productivity and efficiency plan that will ensure we deliver quality services and value for money.
- 4 We will identify innovative solutions to the way we invest in buildings, fleet and equipment to meet emerging risks and hazards.

Response

We will respond immediately and effectively to emergency incidents.

- 3 Review our Fire Control capability to enhance resilience, functionality and performance as a core function at the centre of our service delivery to help keep our communities safe.

Asset Purchase, Maintenance and Contracts

NFRS undertake equipment and appliance checks via the Joint Transport and Logistics Team, who manage the inventory and recording/resolution of defects. Work is underway to improve this process and review the existing inventories to ensure the most effective and efficient processes are used. We are exploring the use of technology to improve equipment checks and inventories, improving data quality and reducing admin time.

A delivery model assessment was undertaken in 2024/25 followed by procurement activity to support the outsourcing of the HGV Maintenance and Support function. The outsourcing function continues to be embedded in 2025/26 to ensure delivery of the most efficient and effective working practices. In addition, following a successful planning application, progress to build a new joint transport and logistics (including Stores) facility with Northamptonshire Police can continue in 2025/26 to further drive efficiencies in this area.

We aim to commence our transition, with a procurement exercise, to supply EV charging infrastructure across our estate. Our investment in technology and infrastructure demonstrates our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, prioritising safety and wellbeing of personnel and the community.

Digitalisation and IT Systems

We have made advances in enhancing our operational capabilities through investments in equipment and technology. This includes the delivery of an Operational Learning (Debriefing) System across both Fire and Police, a new Duty Management System, and the digitalisation of daily incident information logs. The Service continues its ongoing implementation of the Command and Control system, and a wide range of other process and configuration changes to better enhance the security and efficiency of existing systems and digital process. Our Prevention and Protection activities are also improving processes and utilising digital technology (CFRMIS) to streamline information recording and expand the capability of operational crews. Further investment into new devices for vehicles (MDTs) will support prevention activities for efficient resource usage; ongoing initial procurement activity is also underway to also assess suitable software options. Investment in 2024/25 in a performance management information tool has also started to assist planning, performance, and project management.

NFRS have continued to successfully invest in their digitalisations of non-operational processes through their jointly procured systems with Northamptonshire Police to provide a Payroll, HR, and Finance System. In addition, the Service has also benefited from the shared resources and skills to deliver an in-house built HR Case Management System to enable the provision of better data and support to managers and supervisors in the areas that they need it.

As part of the future digitalisation of non-operational processes, the Service during 2025/26 shall commence the re-procurement of a new central Learning Management System (LMS) which as part of its core specification shall include recording all learning and training hours (including Operational training). This shall enable the Service to have greater oversight of training to help inform productivity.

Estates Masterplan Programme

NFRS Estates is improving its facilities with a phased Capital Improvement Programme, which adds new fire stations and refurbishes existing ones over a 12-year span. The Plan is currently being reviewed with Phase One now in the planning applications stages. The Refresh Project seeks to modernise stations and enhance the health and safety of our staff in ensuring safe work practices. The Service continue to work collaboratively to explore the viability of a joint training sites. The Property Service team oversees the whole Estate, conducting ongoing reviews of compliance, maintenance, and improvements.

Procurement

As part of the relationship with the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Northamptonshire Police, a single commercial team oversees all procurement activities. This has improved the Service's value-for-money. The commercial team employs procurement specialists with expertise in commercial law, who monitor supplier performance to make sure the Service receives goods and services as per the contracts it has agreed. They benchmark costs with other fire and rescue services and police forces. Through this dedicated joint

service, professionals provide advice to the Service about market conditions, so it can design tenders better to meet its requirements.

The team also provides greater oversight and now scrutinise lower-value tenders (above £24,000) whereas previously only tenders above £100,000 were subject to formal procurement arrangements. The team leads on several national Blue Light frameworks, such as IT working collaboratively with BlueLight Commercial.

These practices improve purchasing power and reduce costs. For example, the Service reduced the unit cost of buying an IT Service Management Tool through joint procurement with Northamptonshire Police saving circa £37,000.

The team also provide support to the national pensions groups within Police and Fire in regard to the ongoing legislative changes as the framework leads in this sector and assist in ensuring delivery of the new regime in the face of marketplace challenges.

The team have a programme group to enforce best practices for implementing and commencement of the Procurement Act 2023, reducing duplicated efforts while supporting collaborative procurement agenda. The team in 2024/25 achieved circa £54,000 in savings.

Income Generation

During 2024/25 the Service continued to charge in line with the published charging policy where appropriate. In addition, the Service will review and update the Charging Policy in 2025/26 to ensure full cost recover where possible.

Operational Productivity

NFRS is fully committed to increasing the productivity of our wholetime operational crews. We are implementing various initiatives to enhance our emergency response, prevention activities and community engagement, including streamlining processes, upgrading technology, and investing in enhancing skills and capabilities.

Resourcing to risk

NFRS ensures that resources are matched to risk through the use of our Strategic Assessment of Risk, which helps identify and evaluate potential risks and develop tactics to manage them. This allows us to allocate the appropriate resources where they are most needed and prioritise our risk management efforts accordingly. Additionally, frequent revisions are made to the assessment to ensure that the resources remain aligned with the evolving risk landscape.

% of appliances crewed and available

Effective emergency response requires resilience, the ability to quickly mobilise the right type and number of resources. Measuring the percentage of appliances crewed and available is an effective way of helping deliver this. Over the last year availability has remained largely stable, and we have had 14+ appliances (WDS and On-Call) available on 97% of occasions. As

part of the next reporting cycle, the Service shall seek to explore measuring WDS appliances crewed and available as an improvement part of this plan.

Performance Management and Monitoring

NFRS Performance Management framework and reporting process measure workforce productivity; enables ongoing scrutiny of performance and identification of areas for improvement through the Data and Insights Team Monthly/quarterly reporting. Scrutiny of these reports is undertaken through various forums including within the Fire Accountability Board chaired by the Commissioner. As the Service progresses its delivery in line with the CRMP 2025-30 a revised dashboard of Key Performance Indicators shall be developed and monitored through internal Governance arrangements.

Transformation Activity

NCFRA undertook an independent Emergency Cover Review. This looked at how we could meet future challenges and deliver a better service to the public. We know that improvement is a continuous journey. Our CRMP identifies the risks to the county, and we monitor our performance to ensure we have the skills, tools, and processes to reduce risk and keep the community and our staff safe. To keep doing that well, now and in the future, we need to make changes in some areas. The original Review was carried out via independent consultancy, so we have spent time looking at their proposals to consider what is right for us, in the context of our local communities and our Service. We have produced **42 change proposals** to consider in more detail.

As a Service, we were already moving forward with **23** of these changes, which are well underway, and six of these are now being prioritised and taken forward as follows:

- Reviewing our standards of operational response
- Rolling out the duty management system (FSR)
- Look at options for aerial capability in Corby
- Exploring a dedicated RMC team
- Enhancing how we capture and use data
- Introducing a Strategic Cover Tool

The Service has established a project team to oversee the delivery of the workstreams taken forwarded. We have not taken any decision on the rest of the programme – and we will properly engage and consult with staff and the communities we serve where necessary on any changes that might impact.

Our transformation activity, under this programme will going forward align with the Strategic Priorities set out in the CRMP 2025-30 will refine how we work, maximise productivity, and enhance our focus ensuring we deliver the best possible service to our communities, in collaboration with our partners.

NFRS have reviewed the current duty system on the day crewing stations by increasing the establishment to allow staff to be sent out to On-call stations to provide additional resilience and availability. This has structuralised the bank model to reduce the dependency on overtime. NFRS have also embedded managerial arrangements to re-assign WDS Staff on the

2-2-4 duty system, and within the training department to support on-call availability to reduce the need to paid bank staff at OT rate.

NFRS uses a variety of cross-working arrangements to maintain emergency cover including Bank Shifts and WDS staff standing by at On-Call stations to enable the station to maintain availability and readiness to respond. These arrangements are long-established and effective under the existing CRMP but will need to be reviewed following the closure of the consultations for the 2025-30 CRMP and Standards of Operational Response.

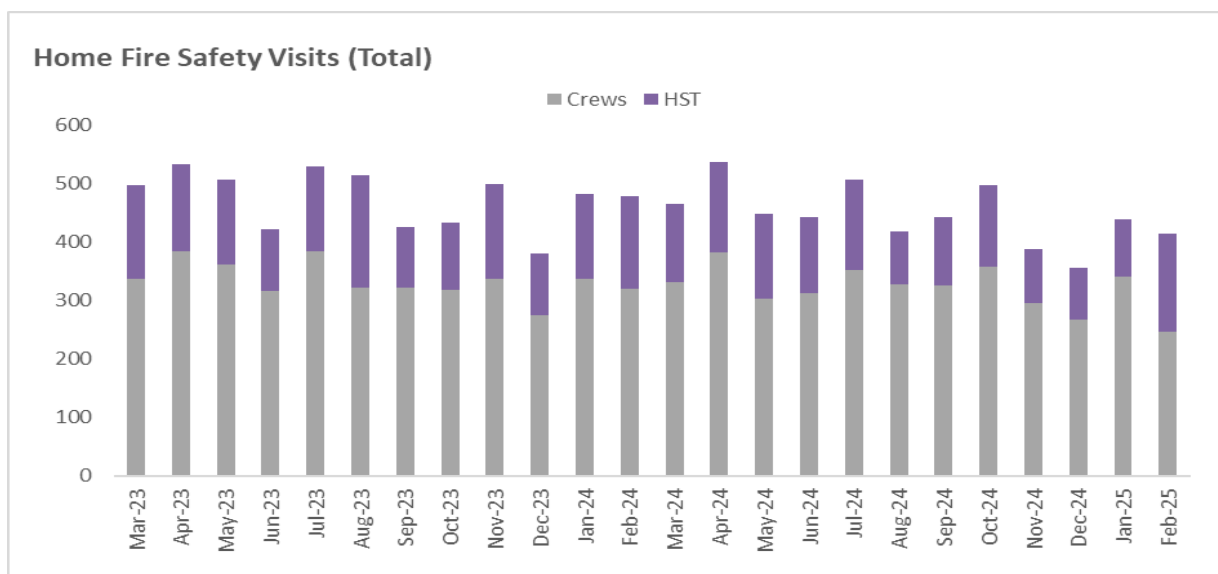
Outcome-based Activities

During 2024/25, NFRS embedded an assurance framework to monitor productivity and provide assurance around staff usage across all stations; the standards are set out in a response performance standards manual, which is monitored through the framework. This will also be reviewed post CRMP consultation as we reset our KPI to achieve our strategic outcomes and the revised Productivity and Efficiency Plan.

This has seen the number of HFSV's being completed above target and focused on High and Very High risk and an improvement in quality through our quality assurance framework. Station Staff both on-call and wholtime are now being used to support the delivery of fire protection checks in support of the Risk-Based Inspection programme, freeing up Protection resources and skills to target the highest risk. They will be used to support any Targeted Risk Management with protection where appropriate to reduce local risk. Bank Staff are being used to support the delivery of rural HFSV's while providing on-call availability.

The Community Risk Management Assurance framework monitors the productivity of operational firefighters as part of the performance framework, which includes community safety delivery, community engagement activity, risk intelligence and exercising, recruitment and positive action, community impact assessments, IRS reporting, hydrant testing, maintaining competence, staff development, equipment testing and maintenance, BCP testing and health and safety reporting/management; development and apprenticeship programme progress compliance programme. The Service does set targets for its Firefighters and monitors activity through the framework; this relates to both gross numerical targets which may be frequency drive. This will also be reviewed post CRMP consultation as we reset our KPI to achieve our strategic outcomes and the revised Productivity and Efficiency Plan.

The target for home fire safety visits has been set at 5,000 with a target of 70% of those visits to be undertaken in High and Very High-Risk homes in line with our CRMP. We have provided greater assurance around this number by visits being allocated by members of our dedicated Fire Prevention Team and giving operational crews improved information of High and Very-High risk areas. Overall HFSV volumes remained on track to exceed for 2024/25* as per the diagram below.



Other activities and measures inside the manual include the timely completion of IRS reports (7 days); Each WDS and VCS crew to engage with a Seldom heard (hard to reach) or priority community group at least once a month to promote Community Safety, positive action recruitment and other engagement opportunities; ensure all SSRIs and 72d familiarisation visits remain current and maintain adherence with the re-inspection programme as set out; to ensure all hydrants for testing and inspection allocated to each crew remain in date and serviced as per the 6 monthly and annual inspection and all staff completed the associated learning.

Every WDS and VCS watch must plan and deliver one operational assurance exercise each year that consists of a minimum of four appliances against a specific SSRI premises, over the border risk or critical/national response type e.g. Mass decontamination. Currently, each WDS and VCS watch to deliver two wholetime recruitment events per annum one to be a station based positive action and where facilities permit the other is to be a 'have a go' event; to ensure 100% Competency Based training framework sign off and compliance; PDR completion, business continuity/Health and safety reviews.

All measures are monitored through local Community Risk Group scorecards and the performance assurance framework.

During 2024/25, NFRS improved administration processes in relation to HFSV allocation and recording via implementation of the new CFRMIS hosted version and the Vulnerable Persons Module. The next phase is the embedding of the operational risk module to join up information and intelligence across protection, prevention and response.

Strategic Priorities 2025-2030

The following are how we plan to increase productivity:

Station Routines

To maximise productivity of our WDS staff we shall review station routines.

Resource to Risk

We will continuously monitor our response times to incidents and review the locations and use of resources to ensure we achieve a timely and effective response, with strategic cover resourcing to risk. Additionally, we will complete a task analysis of our incident types to ensure a proportionate and safe response is mobilised.

The One Risk approach

We will use technology to easily capture and share local risk information to enhance prevention, protection and response. This will enable crews to work more remotely from appliances and undertake simultaneous activity in the community, such as HFSV's, gathering and reviewing section 7(2)(d) risk information and undertaking Fire Protection activity at the same location or area where appropriate.

Days of Action

Operational crews will be working with Prevention and Protection colleagues targeting specific risks such as tall buildings (high-rise), speaking to residents about home fire safety, smoke alarms, building evacuation and testing water supplies and updating risk information held.

Hydrant Inspections

An increased level of simultaneous activity will be undertaken by operational crews to increase capacity and complete more hydrant inspections, building on current monitored outputs. This shall be achieved by operational crews undertaking hydrant inspection across High and Medium risks hydrants. We plan to improve productivity by accurately recording time spent on this activity through exploring digital technology to support in the capture of the activity.

7(2)(d) Visits

NFRS will continue to gather building and site risk information and conduct visits to keep held data up to date, with inspection frequency and level depending on risk. We plan to improve productivity by accurately recording time spent on this activity.

Fire Safety Checks

There will be further development on the use of operational crews for Fire Protection checks, building on previous themed activity such as checking means of escape in shopping centres at seasonal busy periods. We plan to improve productivity by more accurately recording time spent on this activity.

HFSVs

We have improved our risk matrix for the delivery of HFSVs to ensure that crew visits reach more people with vulnerability factors than in previous years, with fewer visits made to people of lower risk, as per the 2024/25 baseline.

We will more heavily promote the Safelincs online safety checker to promote more members of the community to self-help through this digital offer compared to our 2024/25 baseline.

We will more accurately record the time spent on this activity and HFSV generation activity.

School Visits and Community Engagement

Our crews will increase their presence in priority schools utilising the Staywise package and we will accurately record the time spent on this activity. In line with our strategic priorities of putting communities at the centre of everything we do, we shall also carry out more activities in our communities to aid the development of a wider community safety role ensuring that we are visible and accessible to everyone. Through digitalisation of our processes, we shall then be able to provide accurate reports of activity numbers and time spent by our crews.

Road Safety

We will introduce a brand new station-based activity to promote road safety awareness to mature drivers.

Operational assets management

We are seeking to introduce an improved process for change of watch checks/maintenance for appliances and equipment. This shall be linked to the review of the Asset Management system and associated processes.

The table below provides a summary of completed activities by operational crews for the reporting periods of 2022/23 and 2023/24, and the projected growth in productivity for the periods 2024/25 and 2025/26 across five prevention/protection activities:

Activity	2022/23	2023/24	Planned 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Planned 2025/26
HFSVs	4,181	4,004	3,500	3,756	3,500***
School Visits*	130	151	n/a	96	n/a
Hydrant Inspections	800	804	n/a	878	1,680
7(2)(d) Visits**	99	88	n/a	62	n/a
Fire Safety Audits	41	23	n/a	193	290

*School visits - not available by crews. This is the total by the prevention team

** Service total Service total for Risk Intelligence gathering and familiarisation. This is a frequency based on risk grading of site.

***Focus is on quality and assurance of all HSFV's

Workforce Capacity

The Service is classed as significantly rural, having nine wholetime appliances Monday to Friday during the day, seven wholetime appliances in the evening and weekends and nineteen on-call appliances. The Service has reduced minimum numbers on appliances to four and utilises a model where any additional wholetime personnel over our global crewing figure provide cover on On-call stations and perform prevention and station duties in that area. In

the event of not having any surplus WDS crewing we utilise other operational staff i.e. CRG watch managers, training department personnel or backfill with paid Bank Crewing personnel.

NFRS have reviewed the current duty system on the day crewing stations by increasing the establishment to allow staff to be sent out to on-call stations to provide additional resilience and availability. This has structuralised the bank model to reduce the dependency on overtime. NFRS have also embedded managerial arrangements to re-assign WDS Staff on the 2-2-4 duty system, and within the training department to support on-call availability to reduce the need to paid bank staff at OT rate.

NFRS utilises a variety of cross-working arrangements to maintain emergency cover including Bank Shifts, paid staff standing by at On-Call stations to enable the station to maintain readiness to respond, On-Call staff undertaking shifts on career stations for the same purposes. These arrangements are long-established and are effective.

In response to the Your Future Service (ECR) project and with the outcomes of the public consultation on the 2025-30 CRMP and Standards of Operational Response, NFRS will assess the best locations, shift patterns and sustainable delivery model based on the needs of Northamptonshire. This data-led approach may identify the potential financial savings/efficiencies against the primary purpose of ensuring the correct emergency cover across the county.

2024/25 - 3% Productivity Target

As identified in our previous return, the Service was at that point undertaking the Emergency Cover Review. The recommendations and associated outcomes from that would then be being assessed and prioritised and following this any associated efficiency from productivity shall be captured and monitored.

In 2025/26, as part of the CRMP, we shall start to implement new processes to capture and increase wholetime firefighters productivity.



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

