

Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: **Wednesday 2 April 2014**
Time: **10.00am**
Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn off mobile phones.

Membership

Mr S. Agnew	Mr T Jermy
Dr A. Boswell	Mr W. Northam
Mrs J. Chamberlin	Mr M. Sands
Mr J. Childs	Mr N. Shaw
Mr N. Dixon	Mr P. Smyth
Mr J. Dobson	Mrs A. Thomas (Chairman)
Mr T. FitzPatrick	Mr D Thomas
Ms D. Gihawi	Mr J. Timewell
Mr B. Iles	

Non Voting Cabinet Member

Mr D. Roper

**For further details and general enquiries about this Agenda
please contact the Committee Officer, Sonya Blythe,
on 01603 223029
or email committees@norfolk.gov.uk**

A g e n d a

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending.

2 Minutes

(Page **5**)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held 22 January 2014

3 Members to Declare any Interests

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is on your Register of Interests you must not speak or vote on the matter.

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is not on your Register of Interests you must declare that interest at the meeting and not speak or vote on the matter.

In either case you may remain in the room where the meeting is taking place. If you consider that it would be inappropriate in the circumstances to remain in the room, you may leave the room while the matter is dealt with.

If you do not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you may nevertheless have an **Other Interest** in a matter to be discussed if it affects:

- your well being or financial position
- that of your family or close friends
- that of a club or society in which you have a management role
- that of another public body of which you are a member to a greater extent than others in your ward.

If that is the case then you must declare such an interest but can speak and vote on the matter.

4 To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

5 Public Question Time

15 minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given.

Please note that all questions must be received by Friday 28 March at 5pm. Please submit your question(s) to the person named on the front of this agenda. For guidance on submitting public questions, please view the Council Constitution, Appendix 10, Council Procedure Rules at www.norfolk.gov.uk/reviewpanelquestions

6 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

15 minutes for local members to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given.

Please note that all questions must be received by Friday 28 March at 5pm. Please submit your question(s) to the person named on the front of this agenda.

7 Cabinet Member Feedback

8 Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Finance Monitoring Report for 2013/14. (Page 29)

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

9 Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2013/14. (Page 38)

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

10 Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2014/15 (Page 48)

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

11 Automatic Fire Alarms Reduction - 2014/15 (Page 83)

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

12 5 December 2013 East Coast Flood Response by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (Page 90)

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

13 Collaborative Opportunities (Page 95)

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

14 Outcome of LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge - 28 to 31 January 2014 (Page 101)

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

Group Meetings

Conservatives	9.00am	Cranworth Room
UKIP	9.00am	Room 504
Labour	9.00am	Room 513
Liberal Democrats	9.00am	Room 530

Chris Walton
Head of Democratic Services
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Martineau Lane
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Date Agenda Published: 25 March 2014



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Fire and Rescue Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 22 January 2014
Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:	Mr S Agnew	Mr B Iles
	Mrs J Chamberlin	Mr T Jermy
	Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh	Mr W Northam
	Mr J Childs	Mr N Shaw
	Mr D Collis	Mr P Smyth
	Mr A Dearnley	Mrs A Thomas (Chairman)
	Mr N Dixon	Mr D Thomas
	Ms D Gihawi	Mr J Timewell

Cabinet Member: Mr D Roper

Also Present: Mrs K Palframan – Brigade Manager
Mr N Williams – Chief Fire Officer
Mrs K Haywood – Scrutiny Support Manager

1. Apologies and substitutions

Apologies had been received from Dr Boswell (Mr Dearnley substituting), Mr FitzPatrick (Michael Chenery substituting), Mr Sands (Mr Collis substituting) and Mr Dobson.

The Chairman welcomed the two new members to the Panel, Mr Jermy and Mr Thomas.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

Mr Northam was nominated and duly elected as vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

3. Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 20 November 2013 were agreed by the Panel and signed by the Chairman subject to the following clarifications:-

Item 1. The Chief Fire Officer noted that his name had been missed from the attendance list.

Item 7.6. should read:- “The Fire and Rescue Awards evening had taken place on 13 November 2013. This had marked the achievements of firefighters, staff, volunteers and the public. . . “

4. Declarations of Interest

The following declaration was confirmed:

- Mrs Thomas noted that her daughter's boyfriend was a retained firefighter.

5. Items of Urgent Business

5.1 There were no items of urgent business.

6. Public Questions

6.1 Appendix A to these minutes sets out the public questions and replies received for this meeting.

7. Local Member Issues/Questions

The Chairman mentioned that Mr Spratt had emailed her to thank the Fire and Rescue Service for attending a fire at his farm.

8. Cabinet Member Feedback

8.1 The Cabinet Member for Public Protection gave the following updates:-

8.2 Following the tidal and storm surge in December 2013, thanks were passed to the Fire and Rescue Service staff who had helped to keep communities safe through both emergency responses and with rebuilding after the event. The Cabinet Member paid tribute to colleagues from across the country who had assisted with the emergency response in Walcott, Norfolk. The Cabinet Member also noted that a team from Norfolk had been mobilised to South-West England on 2 January 2014 to assist with flooding issues. The Cabinet Member and Chairman asked that the Panels gratitude be passed to all of those who had been involved.

Members asked what lessons had been learned from the tidal and storm surge. The Cabinet Member responded that a number of meetings had been held between the County Council and district councils during and since the incident. A briefing had been held for Members the previous week. In addition it was suggested that a formal report could be brought to the next meeting of the Panel.

It was noted that there were plans to replace the flood gates in King's Lynn with new gates of the same size. As the tidal surge had almost breached the current gates it was suggested that higher gates should be purchased instead. The Cabinet Member agreed to follow this up.

Seven High Volume Pump resources had been made available during the flooding to pump surface water away. Each pump could remove up to eight tonnes of water per minute. Members raised concerns that the water had been put back into local rivers which had caused additional flooding and that not enough water had been removed. It was clarified that the priority of the pumps had been to protect local electrical sub stations in order to keep power to homes, businesses, hospitals, other essential infrastructure and to keep roads running freely. For the most part these defences had worked.

8.3 The Cabinet Member continued that there had been several periods of industrial action since the last meeting. As on previous occasions, emergency response cover of approximately 50% had been maintained. On New Year's Eve a local agreement had been invoked when a fire started at the Great Hospital in Norwich, and fire fighters had left their picket lines and attended the incident. There had been no notice received of any additional strike action

since this date

- 8.4 A tender document had been submitted regarding working with Norfolk Police more collaboratively in the future. Responses had been received and were in the process of being evaluated.
- 8.5 The Suffolk and East Coast Partnership had met to work on a series of collaborations. The Cabinet Member would shortly meet with his counterpart from Suffolk County Council in order to look at how services could be improved and how spending could be reduced by working more closely together.

In response to questions the Cabinet Member clarified that he hoped there would be a large amount of cross-county collaboration but that the Fire and Rescue Services (NFRS) in Norfolk and Suffolk would continue as two separate services for the foreseeable future.

9 Fire and Rescue Integrated Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report for 2013-14.

- 9.1 The Fire and Rescue Integrated Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report for 2013-14 (item 9) was received by the Panel. This monitored the priorities of the service and provided an update on performance, finance and risk monitoring information.
- 9.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:-
 - There had been an increase over the last year in the number of domestic fires. The previous year had been particularly low and it was usual to see year on year fluctuations.
 - Officers would provide information on how many of the properties which had experienced domestic fires had smoke alarms fitted.
- 9.3 It was **RESOLVED** that:-
 - The report be noted.
 - The integrated risk management plan be agreed

10 Norfolk Putting People First Consultation Responses.

- 10.1 The Cabinet Member for Public Protection presented the findings from the Norfolk: Putting People First budget consultation and the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments, attached to the minutes as Appendix B.

11 Putting People First – Service and Budget Planning 2-14/17

- 11.1 The Putting People First – Service and Budget Planning 2014/17 report (item 11) was received. This set out the latest information on the Local Government Finance Settlement and specific information on the financial and planning context for Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) for the next three years. It also set out changes to the budget planning proposals and the proposed cash limit revenue budget for the service based on current proposals and pressures.
- 11.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:
 - It was regrettable that the suggested approach was one of making savings from the

NFRS budget rather than an emphasis being placed on generating income and revenue. It had been hoped that projects such as the purchase of the former RAF Coltishall site and the Community Interest Company would have been generating income by this time.

- The cost of buying and fitting smoke detectors for vulnerable residents of Norfolk totalled £80k a year. It had been suggested that this service should be cut in order to meet the targeted budget savings. Officers advised that standard smoke detectors were purchased via a frameback contract at approximately £10 per item, which included a battery life of ten years. However specialist alarms for the deaf and the blind could cost as much as £100.
- In rented properties landlords had the responsibility to fit fire alarms. However if the service visited and there was not one in place, one would be fitted.
- A fire and rescue volunteers scheme had been introduced in 2012 and had attracted 46 volunteers to date. Volunteers were able to carry out home fire risk checks and install the free smoke detectors, in addition to other prevention and education initiatives. Volunteers offered an alternative to using wholtime crews to do the job, particularly in rural areas where there the service had limited resources. It was an example of the Service looking for the most efficient ways to carry out this work and offered a more cost effective option than deploying whole crews.
- Various companies, such as insurance companies, could be contacted to ascertain whether there were any who would be interested in sponsoring the smoke detector service, which would enable the NFRS to make the budget saving whilst still offering the free smoke alarms.
- £0.605k savings would be achieved from staffing changes. A significant part of this had been fulfilled by an appliance being removed from Norwich and subsequent turnover of staff. In addition savings would be required from managing vacancies and recruitment to posts. The number of call-outs had reduced and so more efficiencies had come from that.
- Officers would continue to look for opportunities to adapt how the NFRS worked, in order to make more budgetary savings and generate additional income.
- Front line services had been maintained despite the proposed cuts. The amount of fire stations would increase by one and the number of appliances would remain the same.

11.3 Two options for achieving the required budget savings of £2.7m were presented, at Appendix A and B of the Panel report. Both options would achieve the same savings overall but would be achieved by allocating the savings differently in each year. Following discussion it was proposed and seconded that option B be accepted. This would make best use of the purchase of more cost effective fire engines, the ending of leases and the ICT refresh, all of which would occur in 2017. The Cabinet Member confirmed that this was the working proposal which Cabinet had been using and was a realistic basis on which to achieve the savings. This proposal was AGREED.

11.4 It was proposed and seconded that proposal 56 – to stop supplying and fitting free smoke detectors – be held until such time that alternative funding streams had been examined and a further report provided to Members. It was suggested that this could be supported by a working group to look into the options for providing the free smoke alarms and that this group should draw on those who could offer solutions to the problem. In this regard, it was noted that Mr Childs and Mr Dixon had expressed particular interest in supporting this work and that a contribution should be invited from Mr Taylor, a volunteer with the NFRS.

11.5 It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The provisional finance settlement for 2014/15 and the latest planning position for Norfolk County Council be noted.
- The updated information on spending pressures and savings for NFRS and the cash limited budget for 2014/15 in context with the feedback from the Putting People First consultation be noted.
- The option at Appendix B of the Panel report be agreed as the model by which savings would be delivered.
- The proposed list of new and amended capital schemes and the proposed capital programme for NFRS be noted.
- The proposal to stop supplying and fitting free smoke detectors be held until such time that alternative funding streams had been examined and a further report provided to Members.

12 LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge

12.1 The LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge report (item 12) was received. The peer challenge would take place from 28-31 January 2014 and the visit would examine the completed self-assessment by NFRS.

12.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:

- Few responses had been received to the invitation which had been circulated to Panel members asking them to participate. The Chairman reminded Members that it was important to engage with the peer review and asked that party spokesmen ensured that one Member from each party would attend the review.
- The NFRS was already very financially self aware but always looked for ways to improve. This would include looking for opportunities to work in a more collaborative fashion with other counties.
- The service had worked to ensure that procurements were predominantly undertaken from framework contracts.
- The East of England Ambulance Service were charged for their use of fire stations as a base.
- The self-assessment demonstrated how the NFRS worked as a partner.
- A merger with another service had not been ruled out, if it would benefit the communities of Norfolk. If parliamentary agreement was received for a merger the NFRS would stand apart from the County Council and raise its own council tax as a precept authority.

12.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

13 Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

13.1 The Scrutiny Forward Work Programme report (item 13) was received. This considered any outstanding scrutiny work which should be completed by April 2014 and asked the Panel to consider whether there were any additional scrutiny issues which should be considered.

13.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:-

- An additional meeting would be held on 2 April 2014, at which the following items of

scrutiny could be considered:

- Closer working with other fire authorities
- Lessons learned from the tidal and storm surge
- Feedback from peer review

13.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the following items be added to the Scrutiny forward work programme:-

- Closer working with other fire authorities
- Lessons learned from the tidal and storm surge
- Feedback from peer review

14 Retained Availability

14.1 The retained availability report (item 14) was received. This updated Members on actions which had been implemented regarding retained fire station availability and further work which was underway to improve operational performance.

14.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:-

- For Heacham and Hunstanton, a pilot was being run to use dual riding was used when there were not enough retained firefighters available at one fire station to run a full crew. Crews would be used from across the two stations to provide cover.
- Swaffham fire station had experienced staffing problems over the past three years which had impacted on the service available. New crew were in the process of being trained which would manage the problem.
- There was no link between fire stations with poor retained availability and the new compact appliances which are to be purchased. Stations receiving the new appliances had been chosen due to risk profile and location.
- The establishment for a one pump fire station was typically twelve retained firefighters. However the NFRS were able to allocate more or less staff if circumstances occurred which could justify the change.

14.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on 2 April 2014.

The meeting ended at 12.25pm

CHAIRMAN



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6. Public Questions

6.1 One question from Mr D. Taylor

I am a Fire and Rescue Service Community Volunteer. I wish to be able to continue giving support to the vulnerable residents in the community who do benefit from a Home Fire Risk Check and the provision and installation of a FREE Smoke Alarm. I understand that this Free provision is likely to be withdrawn.

I would like to find a solution to this dilemma.

My question is:-

If funding is unavailable for Smoke alarms, could this be delayed, (for an agreed period), until a small working group, 4-5 people, is set up to explore and implement alternative funding?

Response by Mr Dan Roper, Cabinet Member for Public Protection.

As part of the funding reductions the option to cease funding for free smoke alarms has been considered as part of the public consultation of proposed changes. There is no statutory duty to make provision for free smoke alarms. Between 2004 and 2008, every Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) was allocated additional funding from a £25 million grant to deliver Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC). During this period they collectively conducted two million HFSCs and fitted 2.4million smoke alarms free of charge. After 2008 most, if not all, FRS continued to make provision for HFSC and free smoke alarms targeted at those most vulnerable from fire.

It is for the Fire Authority to determine if they wish to withdraw the funding to provision of smoke alarms, either in part or completely. If it is their will for this to continue, in part or in full, then Norfolk FRS (NFRS) will either have to be provided with the necessary budget to undertake this, currently up to £80k per year, or find this sum from other parts of its budget. The latter may result in further consultation on reduction of front line FRS provision.

The service is working with other agencies to seek opportunities to provide free smoke alarms and other safety related items, where these are deemed necessary on a case by case basis, for teams working with vulnerable people. NFRS will also be looking at opportunities to support the provision of smoke alarms through other funding streams. These may include, sponsorship, payment by individuals for the items with fitting provided by NFRS or others working on our behalf. We are always willing to seek assistance from those able to help us achieve our prevention aims and therefore welcome the question and offer made by Mr Taylor.

Mr Taylor asked a supplementary question. He noted that vulnerable people within the community would suffer without this service and asked whether a solution could be found through use of community or business funding?

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection agreed that he would like to see the service continue, but that it could not be justified through the revenue budget. Some underspend had been identified in the current year's budget which would enable the service to continue in the short term by the bulk purchase of smoke detectors, whilst an alternative solution was sought. It would be less viable to charge people for the service as there would then be an additional cost to administer the scheme.



Feedback

'Norfolk Putting People First' Budget Consultation 2014/17

Public Protection – Norfolk Fire and Rescue
Service – Cllr Daniel Roper

The overall consultation – a quick overview

- Responses received by email, letter, online, telephone and social media
- Over 4,400 respondents submitted over 15,000 comments
- These figures don't include petitions with over 2,100 signatures
- Panel feedback will form part of the consultation and will inform Cabinet's recommendations to be presented at their meeting on the 27th January

Financial background

- £189 million gap to make up by 2016/17
- Proposals amounting to over £134 million savings identified so far – with more to be identified in years 2 & 3
- Around 56% of these are from “cutting our own costs” including efficiency measures, better procurement, improved technology and income generation

The council's priorities (Excellence in Education, Real Jobs, and Good Infrastructure)

- General support for priorities but council challenged to deliver them
- Many respondents felt that supporting vulnerable people, public safety or the environment should be a priority

The council's approach and strategy for bridging the funding gap

- Some support for the approach – “sound”, “pragmatic”, “common sense” – but should the council be more radical?
- Divided opinions on outsourcing services, technology and selling assets
- The council should reduce bureaucracy and “red tape” through more collaboration, better processes and improved procurement

Overall package of proposals

- P27 Reduce the transport subsidy for students aged 16-19 generated the most responses
- Responses about libraries generated a lot of responses – making up 6 of the top 10 responded-to proposals
- Many respondents felt that overall the council's package of proposals affected vulnerable people the most

Freezing Council Tax

- Around 26% of respondents supported the freeze – usually on principle or on the basis of affordability
- Around 55% of people favour of an increase in Council Tax. The vast majority of these suggest a small increase (1-2% or in line with inflation)
- Many respondents wanted clarity about what any increase would be spent on

**Feedback on Public Protection –
Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service
budget proposals and the draft
NFRS Integrated Risk Management
Plan 2014/17**

Proposals

2 proposals that had to be consulted on, out of a programme of efficiencies and savings relating to £2.171 million total for the next 3 years:

- P55 Purchase different, cost-effective fire vehicles for some stations (£1.125 million)*
- P56 Stop supplying and fitting free smoke detectors (£0.080 million).

* Revised down to £0.864 million for option A and £1.025 million for option B, as per Service and Budget Planning Report.

Strength of opinion

- Overall, there were 403 responses, made by 268 individuals and organisations
- 19 organisations made formal submissions
- 150 responses to P55 Purchase different, cost-effective fire vehicles for some stations, 109 supporting and 7 opposing
- 253 responses to P56 Stop supplying and fitting free smoke detectors, 118 supporting and 77 opposing.

Note – there were a number of responses in each case which were more general in nature and so it was not possible to categorise them as either supporting or opposing.

P55 Purchase different, cost-effective fire vehicles for some stations - themes

- Do not reduce cover and response times
- Seek agreement from firefighters
- Practicality – assurance that the vehicles are suitable and fit for purpose
- Technical issue - unable or unqualified to comment

(25 responses related to alternatives for this proposal).

P56 Stop supplying and fitting free smoke detectors - themes

- Smoke detectors cheap and easy to fit
- Personal responsibility
- Protect the vulnerable and most at risk
- Target preventative activity
- Unable or unqualified to comment on cost effectiveness

(102 responses related to alternatives for this proposal).

P55 Purchase different, cost-effective fire vehicles for some stations - alternatives

- Charging, sponsorship and advertising to generate income
- Cooperation with other Fire and Rescue Services
- Defer the vehicle purchase and reduce the overall number of vehicles
- Change the vehicle specification to a 'special'.

P56 Stop supplying and fitting free smoke detectors - alternatives

Maintain part or all of the service:

- Sponsorship and advertising
- Charging
- Scale back and target the service
- Supply but do not fit.

The outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments

- P55 Purchase different, cost-effective fire vehicles for some stations – this will not result in any change to the overall number of fire and rescue vehicles used for emergency response or affect our service standard. No adverse, disproportionate impacts have been identified for this proposal
- P56 Stop supplying and fitting free smoke detectors - this proposal is most likely to impact upon vulnerable residents, including older and disabled people who we know are less likely to have a working smoke detector in their homes, and are slower to react should a fire break out in their homes.

Finally

- Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the consultation
- Lots of time spent preparing and submitting written views and attending events
- Every response has been read and considered
- Responses have, and will continue to, inform how we shape services and mitigate risks as we make savings.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Finance Monitoring Report for 2013/14

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

Summary

This report provides the fourth finance update for 2013/14 to the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The information included within this report is the most up to date available at the time of writing. Any significant changes to the information between publishing this paper and presenting to Panel will be updated verbally.

Finance Summary

As at the end of January (period 10) the overall approved revenue budget for Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is £29.156m. The departmental forecast revenue outturn position for 2013/14 is a balanced budget.

Table 1: Overall budget and the forecast end of year outturn

Service	Budget	Forecast period 10	Variance	%	Variance period 9
Fire and Rescue Service	29.156	29.156	0.000	0%	0.000

There are financial pressures in NFRS but these are offset by underspends and the use of reserves. Savings targets remain a high priority for the Service through its Priority Based Budget service reviews.

The need to drive out future savings remains and whilst certain cost pressures remain on an upward trend, the planned forecast is to meet these pressures within the overall budget by identifying savings in the current year. Heading into the end of the financial year, NFRS is in a confident position.

Action Required

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report, to note progress and consider whether any aspects should be identified for further scrutiny.

1. Background

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the latest financial position against the budget. The most significant financial changes, or areas of concern, are discussed in more detail within the main report.

2. Revenue Budget 2013/14

As at the end of January (period 10) the overall Departmental forecast revenue outturn position for 2013/14 is a balanced budget.

In period 9, a £400k under spend relating to leasing was removed from the budget to contribute towards the energy from waste reserve. The original intention was to carry this forward as part of delivering future ICT budget savings but this is no longer required due to changes to the 2014/15 budget savings that were approved by County Council in February. The revised 2013/14 budget for NFRS now stands at £29.156m as at period 10.

Table 2 details the more significant variances as at the end of January 2014. Further information is provided at Appendix A.

Service Area	2013/14 Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance		Reason for Variance
			£m	%	
Salaries	19.680	18.870	(0.810)	(4)	Ongoing vacancy management and restructure.
Pensions	0.904	1.322	+0.418	+46	Unfunded pension payments to retirees – ill health and injury.
Training and Development	0.782	0.765	(0.017)	(2)	Mainly reduction in direct training costs.
Personnel	0.169	0.132	(0.037)	(22)	Reductions in legal/medial fees.
Communications ICT	1.112	1.255	+0.143	+13	Additional licence and maintenance contract costs.
Supplies	0.664	0.640	(0.024)	(4)	Increase in PV income and reduced utility expenditure
Finance	3.806	3.875	+0.069	+2	This net over spend relates to the net cost of planned invest to save

					initiatives offset by under spend on leasing budgets.
Technical Services	0.312	0.377	0.065	+21	Increased contract maintenance costs.
New Dimensions	0.000	0.179	+0.179	>+100	Additional spend on equipment in USAR and Dive Team.

3. Capital Programme

The overall revised capital budget for the services reported to this Panel is £2.848m as at the end of January 2014. The committed expenditure and national procurement frameworks means that some of the original capital programme has been reprofiled to future years.

Scheme or programme of work	2013/14 Revised budget £m	2013/14 Forecast outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Boat Facilities	0.032	0.032	0.000
Carrow Training Structure	0.050	0.050	0.000
Carbon Energy Reduction Fund (CERF)	0.003	0.003	0.000
Communities and Local Government unallocated	0.003	0.003	0.000
Corporate Minor Works	0.056	0.056	0.000
East Coast Project	0.192	0.192	0.000
Generators	0.061	0.061	0.000
King's Lynn new build	0.100	0.100	0.000
Station Improvements	0.011	0.011	0.000
Training	0.057	0.057	0.000
USAR (Urban Search and Rescue)	0.122	0.122	0.000
Vehicle replacement	2.161	2.161	0.000
Total	2.848	2.848	0.000

4. Reserves and Provisions

For Reserves and Provisions forecast at period ten, the final outturn position for 2013/14 is set out in Table 4.

Table 4: NFRS Reserves and Provisions				
Reserve/ Provision	Balance at 31-03-13 £m	Outturn Balance at 31-01-14 £m	Movement £m	Comment
Part Time Worker Regulations (Pensions)	0.850	0.850	0.000	A provision towards the retrospective access to pension awarded to Retained Firefighters. This follows the outcome of a legal challenge according RDS qualifying status under the Part Time Worker Regulations.
Uniformed Staff Pensions	0.348	0.348	0.000	Ill Health funding contribution.
Equipment Leasing	0.918	0.918	0.000	To contribute to the purchase of fire appliances.
Operational Equipment and PPE (firefighter clothing)	1.018	0.967	-0.051	To be spent on Retained Alerter System and contribute to the purchase of fire appliances and stowed equipment.
Fire and Rescue Service Operational Reserve	0.542	0.542	0.000	This reserve is held to cover exceptional operational activity.
Grants and Contributions	0.244	0.195	-0.049	See table 5 below for breakdown.
Total	3.920	3.820	-0.100	

Under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), grants and contributions that are not used at year end are transferred into a reserve rather than treated as a creditor.

Grants and Contributions Detail

Table 5 shows further information in relation to the revenue grants received for the Fire and Rescue Service with the outturn position placed into the Grants and Contributions reserve at year end.

Table 5: NFRS Grants and Contributions				
Grant	Balance at 31-03-13 £m	Outturn Balance at 31-01-14 £m	Movement £m	Reason for Variance
USAR Accommodation Grant	0.112	0.086	-0.026	Projects underway, due for completion in 2014/15.
New Dimension Incident Response Unit Decontamination	0.058	0.058	0.000	Grant for training salaries within the Incident Response Unit.
Environmental Protection Unit	0.024	0.000	-0.024	Vehicle Purchase.
Other small Grants and Contributions	0.051	0.051	0.000	To be utilised in 2014/15.
Total	0.245	0.195	-0.050	

5. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This report is not making proposals that will have a direct impact on equality of access or outcomes for protected groups. EqIAs have been conducted on aspects of the Service that were affected by original proposals in the Big Conversation, and subsequent transformation and efficiency projects.

6. Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

There are no direct implications of this report for the S17 Crime and Disorder Act.

7. Environmental Impact

There are no environmental implications from issues arising in this report.

8. Conclusion

As at the end of January (period 10) the overall Departmental forecast revenue outturn position for 2013/14 is a balanced budget. There are financial pressures in NFRS but these are offset by some underspends and the use of reserves.

The capital programme forecast is expected to be on budget and accounts for reprofiled spend as part of ongoing project reviews. Where the timing of spend is identified for reprofiling, funding is allocated into the next financial year. Two of the major projects currently under way are the new build fire and rescue station at King's Lynn (planned for completion in 2014/15) and also the procurement of red fleet fire vehicles, which will release leasing budgets to contribute to NFRS savings targets over the next three years.

The reserves and provision position as at period ten remains stable leading into year end. There are some pending decisions relating to operational equipment purchases due before year end.

NFRS is keeping under review the forecasting and monitoring process and will revise the budget for future years as appropriate.

9. Action Required

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report, to note progress and consider whether any aspects should be identified for further scrutiny.

10. Background Papers

None.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

James Millar, Accountant for: 01603 223112 james.millar@norfolk.gov.uk
Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service
N&S Probation Trust



If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Karen Tyrrell on 01603 819703 and we will do our best to help.

NFRS Finance Monitoring Report for Period 10 2013/14

Explanation of over and underspends

Finance regularly meets with RBOs and the following significant variances are based on a robust review of budgets, including a review of current and planned income and expenditure. Shown below are explanations of significant variances as at 31 January 2014 (period 10).

In period 9, a £400k under spend relating to leasing was removed from the budget to contribute towards the energy from waste reserve. The original intention was to carry this forward as part of delivering future ICT budget savings but this is no longer required due to changes to the 2014/15 budget savings that were approved by County Council in February.

The revised 2013/14 budget for NFRS now stands at £29.156m as at period 10.

- **Salaries: (£-810k)**

The forecast under spend at period 10 relates mainly to the ongoing management of vacancies and internal restructures. The adverse movement (period 9 £-850k) of £40k relates mainly to increased turnout fees in relation to the December flooding incident.

- **Pensions: £+418k**

This over spend relates to elements of the pension that are all unfunded pension payments to retirees and also ill health/injury pensions and lump sums (some relate to one year and others to three year based payments). The long term view is that these costs will reduce as members exit the Service and those that will have the option to join the new scheme.

The forecast overspend at period 10 relates to both RDS and WFFF retirees.

- **Personnel: (£-37k)**

As at period 10, the under spend of £-37k relates mainly to reduced spend on legal/medical fees. This represents a £5k favourable movement compared to period 9 in relation to medical fees.

- **Communications: £+143k**

As at period 10, the over spend has reduced by £3k to £143k. The RBO has communicated possible reductions in BT contract negotiations in the next few periods but will report further once this is confirmed.

- **Fleet: (£-13k)**

As at period 10, Fleet is reporting a £-13k under spend, which is an adverse movement from the previous period of £52k. This is mainly due to additional expenditure relating to maintenance and servicing.

- **Supplies: (£-24k)**

As at period 10, Supplies report a £-24k under spend, which is a favourable movement of £29k from the previous period. This is due to reductions in the level of gas costs.

- **Central Finance: £+69k**

The above over spend at period 10 is forecast after identifying ongoing leasing savings arising from capital purchases and offset by holding balances to facilitate future savings initiatives. The underlying holding balance figure is currently forecasted at £-191k.

A number of items were agreed to be funded (and purchased by 31 March 2014) at the last Board meeting including;

- Fitness equipment for stations.
- Smoke Detectors.
- Additional BA equipment for type B appliances.

Any remaining balance available at year end will be utilised to meet part of the costs of the Thermal Imaging Cameras and minimise the impact on the Operational Equipment reserve.

- **Special Ops (OATS): £+65k**

The over spend as at period 10 remains at £+65k and is due to increases in equipment purchases and maintenance.

- **Grants: £+179k (Highlight)**

The Grants budgets forecast has for the first time this year decreased in forecast of salaries by £25k from the previous period. This budget area has proved volatile historically and even though a favourable movement in the over spend is reported for period 10, close management of the budgets is recommended.

A further report relating to the spend types and breakdown of expenditure within the Grants service budgets is shown at Appendix A.

Appendix A

Summary

Period 10 is reporting a balanced forecast position for NFRS for 2013/14.

The table below provides the overall position for NFRS as at 31 January 2014.

Cost Centre	Description	Net Budget	Actual Outturn	2013/14 Variance	2013/14 Variance
		£000s	£000s	Over / (Under) £000s	Over / (Under) %
FF1000	Salaries	19,680	18,870	(810)	(4%)
FF3000	Pensions	904	1,322	418	46%
FF0800	Premises	140	153	13	9%
FF8000	BMF	493	493	-	-
FF0900	Hydrants	87	87	-	-
FF1099	Commercial Training	11	18	7	70%
FF1400	Training & Development	782	765	(17)	(2%)
FF1100	Personnel	169	132	(37)	(22%)
FF1200	Fire Protection	(1)	(0)	1	69%
FF1300	Communications ICT	1,112	1,255	143	13%
FF1500	Fleet	901	888	(13)	(1%)
FF1600	Supplies	664	640	(24)	(4%)
FF1700	Central Finance	3,806	3,875	69	2%
FF1800	Special Ops	312	377	65	21%
FF1901	Community Safety	108	100	(8)	(8%)
FF1908	Youth Development	(12)	2	14	120%
FF19xx	Grants	0	179	179	-
Total		29,156	29,156	(0)	(0.0%)

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2013/14

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

Executive Summary

Fire and Rescue Authorities have a legal duty to provide both local communities and the Government with an annual statement of assurance that covers what they are doing to implement the local Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and to meet the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities 2012. The statement of assurance covers five key areas: financial information; governance arrangements; operational matters and the IRMP; National Framework requirements; and anticipated future developments.

Action Required

Panel Members are asked to note the Statement of Assurance 2013/14 which has been published on the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service website.

1. Background

- 1.1 Fire and Rescue Authorities have a legal duty to provide both local communities and the Government with an annual statement of assurance that demonstrates that it is doing everything that is expected of it. In essence, this means that Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service are implementing the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and meeting the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities 2012.
- 1.2 The IRMP is a strategic plan that sets out the Fire and Rescue Service's objectives for at least a three year period and it is part of the Norfolk County Council Policy Framework. The purpose of the IRMP process is for Fire and Rescue Authorities to consider and evaluate all risks to communities including risk to life, the economy, heritage and the environment and then to determine the use of resources to meet the requirements of the risks. The IRMP process provides an opportunity for a fundamental review of fire and rescue provision in Norfolk.
- 1.3 The National Framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities 2012 sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England. These are high level expectations. Operational priorities and responses are locally determined as part of the IRMP process and through engagement with a broad range of partners across the public, business and voluntary sectors and members of local communities.
- 1.4 Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to publish their Statements of Assurance for 2013/14 by 31 March 2014. Due to the timing of committee meetings and the volume of work involved in the IRMP, it was not possible to bring the statement to Members

any sooner. However, it has had sign off from the Cabinet Member for Public Protection.

2. Content

2.1 Central Government guidance on the Statement of Assurance states that it should include the following:

- Financial information – the Council’s Statement of Accounts.
- Governance arrangements – the Council’s Annual Governance Statement.
- Operational matters – the IRMP, compliance with legislation, cross border and multi-agency working arrangements.
- Framework requirements – assurance the Service meets the National Framework.
- Future developments – plans in place to deliver improvements to communities.

2.2 The Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2013/14 has been devised as a short, accessible summary document (7 pages) on the basis that it draws together a wide range of information on performance, finance, governance and planning that is already in the public domain. Rather than reproduce all of this material, internet links are provided to previously published documents.

2.3 The Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2013/14 is attached in Appendix 1 and is available on the NFRS website.

3. Other Implications

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This report is not making proposals that will have a direct impact on equality of access or outcomes for diverse and/or protected groups. It provides a summary of policies and operational responses that have already been subject to the EqIA process.

3.2 Environmental Implications

This report is not making proposals that will have environmental implications. It provides a summary of policies and operational responses that have already been subject to an assessment of the Environmental Implications.

4. Section 17 - Crime and Disorder Act

4.1 There are no direct implications as it provides a summary of policies and operational responses that have already been agreed through the 2014/17 Integrated Risk Management Plan.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Panel Members are asked to note the Statement of Assurance 2013/14 that has been published on the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service website.

Background Papers

Communities and Local Government (2012) The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5904/nationalframework.pdf

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014/17 -

<http://www.norfolkfireservice.gov.uk/nfrs/>

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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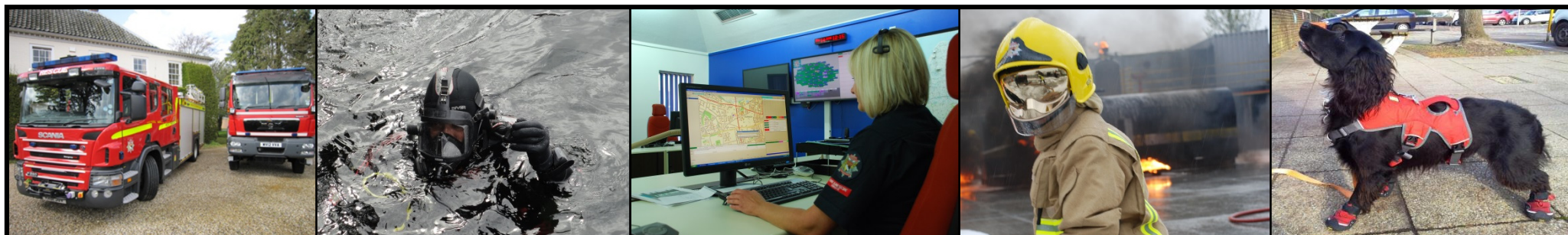
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Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2013/14

Purpose

Fire and Rescue Authorities must provide both local communities and the Government with an annual statement of assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. What this means is that Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) must demonstrate it is doing what the Government expects of it, as laid down in the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities 2012 and that it is delivering the local Integrated Risk Management Plan.





Foreword by Cabinet Member for Public Protection Daniel Roper

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is one of many services provided by Norfolk County Council (NCC). The County Council acts as the Fire Authority, which means that the Council has a legal duty to ensure that an effective fire and rescue service is delivered across the county.

Norfolk is one of the safest counties in England and Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is working hard to make it even safer for residents and visitors. In doing this, the Service works with other County Council departments, external partners, the emergency services and the voluntary sector. Together they focus activities on protecting some of the most vulnerable people in the community from harm.

NFRS offers excellent value for money as one of the lowest cost services in the country. Its long track record of seeking efficiencies and finding better ways of working holds it in good stead for the future, as local Government funding is reduced.



Introduction by the Chief Fire Officer Nigel Williams

Welcome to NFRS's Statement of Assurance. The Service has a responsibility to show local communities that it is meeting the National Framework commitments and complies with relevant legislation.

This Statement provides a summary of our activities and gives links to key documents relating to financial management, governance arrangements and operational management. As a NCC service, our financial and governance arrangements form part of the County Council's managerial and democratic systems and processes.

Responding to emergencies is the most visible part of what we do. We continue to ensure that the Service is ready to respond when called upon, that fire engines and equipment are right for the jobs we take on, and that all staff are trained to deal with emergencies they face. We also work closely with the other emergency services and neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services to provide an integrated response locally, regionally or nationally.

Our staff are our most important asset and I am proud of the work they do to keep Norfolk safe. Their innovative ideas, flexibility and determination to improve their Service and the way they work with other emergency services are a credit to them. We will continue to deliver the best service possible to the communities of Norfolk.

Norfolk's context

The type of fire and rescue service that is operated is influenced by the type of area in which it works. In Norfolk's case, some of the key characteristics considered are:

- 90 miles of coastline.
- 250 miles of inland waterways.
- 6,256 miles of roads.
- 10,567 listed buildings.
- 430 scheduled ancient monuments.
- 401,756 dwellings.
- 32,654 commercial premises.
- 30,000 active businesses.
- Population of 859,400.
- 21.7% of the population aged 65 and over.
- 38% of the county's population live in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn.
- 18% live in market towns.
- 40% live in parishes of over 300 inhabitants and the remaining 4% in parishes with less than 300.
- 8,000 households where English is not the first language.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service resources

There are 41 fire stations across the county. Of these, Carrow and Sprowston stations in Norwich are wholetime only which means they are staffed by firefighters on shifts 24/7. Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Earlham stations have both wholetime and retained firefighters. Thetford station is both day duty crewed and retained. The other 35 stations are crewed by retained firefighters in market towns and villages.

Retained firefighters are staff whose main job is outside the Fire and Rescue Service but they are available on-call to respond to emergencies in their area.

The Service has an establishment of 928.60 posts, of which 287.80 are uniformed, 96.80 are non-uniformed and 544 are retained firefighters.

The Service has a variety of fire engines to tackle a range of different emergencies. For example, heavy rescue pumps are equipped to respond to road traffic collisions, large animal rescue and water rescue. The off-road 4x4 fire engines are used for flooding incidents, heathland/forest fires, and firefighting and rescues at height. Our fleet of specialist vehicles also includes an environmental protection unit, a control vehicle, a water foam unit, a driver training vehicle and an underwater search and recovery diving unit. The Service also hosts a team of Urban Search and Rescue personnel and vehicles that is trained to respond to national, regional or major incidents.

Responding to emergencies

The type of emergency that the Service responds to is changing. The number of fires is falling (16.32% of our calls) and more of the day to day work done by the Service is taken up with responding to accidents on Norfolk's roads (14.95%) and automated fire alarms (27.86%).

Legislative background and the National Framework

Fire and Rescue Authorities have to work to a set of standards laid down in key Acts of Parliament, including the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, and also in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

In the National Framework 2012 ([link](#)), Government has set out the key priorities for Fire and Rescue Services across England, as follows:

- Identify the risks in the local area and make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents.
- Work in partnership with communities and partners to deliver the service.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

The National Framework lists a number of more detailed activities that Fire and Rescue Services must do in the areas of prevention, protection, emergency response, risk and resilience.

The Service must also perform the duties outlined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This includes, working as part of the Norfolk Resilience Forum to maintain and develop Norfolk's Community Risk Register, plan the response to major incidents and emergencies in the county, and carry out multi-agency training exercises as part of the preparation of an effective response.

This Statement of Assurance helps the Service meet the requirement to be accountable to the communities it serves. The guidance note on Statements of Assurance can be found here ([link](#)).

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

The IRMP sets out the issues that the Fire and Rescue Service will need to respond to over the next 3 years and how it will do it.

The IRMP is the single most important document for the Fire and Rescue Service, as it shows what the Service will be doing and why. It is also one of the means by which the public can hold the Service to account.

In line with Government guidance and best practice, the Service consults with the public on the IRMP. As part of NCC's consultation on its budget proposals an extensive consultation exercise took place on NFRS's IRMP proposals in the autumn of 2013. It included meetings and events held with staff, partner agencies, and the public. The information gained from this consultation shaped the final version of the IRMP 2014-17 ([link](#)).

Over the border mutual aid agreements

We work with Fire and Rescue Services in Suffolk, Cambridge and Lincolnshire, supporting each other by responding to emergencies along our shared borders and providing additional support at major incidents. We are able to provide them with national resilience specialist support through urban search and rescue, mass decontamination, high volume pump, and also the underwater search and recovery diving unit. In turn, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service provides us with specialist vehicle support for off-road animal rescue or forestry/heathland fires.

Advice under Health and Safety or other legislation

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service constantly reviews how it responds to emergencies, particularly serious or major events. This helps the Service to ensure that it has the right equipment, training and practices in place to respond effectively and safely. Part of this ongoing review process requires us to formally respond to special rulings relating to Health and Safety or other legislation. For example, NFRS received a Rule 43 Notice from Norfolk's Coroner relating to a road traffic collision in 2011. We have responded to the Rule 43 Notice and are implementing the action plan to improve joint working with the East of England Ambulance Trust and Norfolk Constabulary.

Statement of Accounts

NCC is legally required to provide an annual report, the Statement of Accounts, on how it spends its money. As the Fire Authority, the Council includes in the Statement of Accounts details of the NFRS financial position ([link](#)). This shows that NFRS operates on a relatively small revenue budget, compared to other Council departments, of £29 million, and this is decreasing annually. This equates to £28.61 per head of population in the County, which is excellent value for money compared to similar Fire and Rescue Services. The Family Group Fire and Rescue Services' average is £35.99 and the national average of £39.59.

Governance Statement

NCC is responsible for putting in place effective systems for the governance of its affairs, ensuring services are delivered properly and legally and that any associated risks are managed. The Annual Governance Statement is a review of this. As a County Council service, NFRS's governance arrangements are covered by Norfolk County Council's Annual Governance Statement (page 17 of [link](#)).

Democratic accountability

As a department of the County Council, NFRS is overseen by the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and held to account by Cabinet, the cross-party Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Full Council. On a regular basis, County Councillors review the performance of the service, its financial position and risks that have been identified. The County Councillors also play a

key role in shaping the long term development of the Service. Details of the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel papers are available on the NCC website ([link](#)). During 2014/15 the governance arrangements at NCC will change from a cabinet system to a committee system, thereby amending the reporting and scrutiny arrangements for the Service.

Performance

The Service manages and monitors performance through 40 performance indicators. They reflect the progress of major projects, service performance, management of resources and outcomes for local people. Some of the indicators are former national indicators that we can compare with other Fire and Rescue Services and others are locally determined.

The key indicators for NFRS are:

- Emergency Response Standards – how quickly we are able to get to an emergency.
- Availability of retained fire appliances – how many fire engines that are crewed by retained firefighters are ready and able to respond to an emergency.
- Accidental dwelling fires – the number of fires in people's homes.
- Home fire risk checks – the number of fire safety visits we have carried out, usually with vulnerable people.
- Automatic false alarms – the number of times we respond to a fire alarm that turns out to have been a false alarm.
- Customer satisfaction – what people think of the service we provide.

- Economic cost of fire – an estimate of the overall cost of fires to the county of Norfolk.
- Cost per head of population – the cost of running the fire and rescue service, per person.

Overall, the Service performed well in 2013/14 seeing a reduction in the number of deliberate fires and in the number of automated false alarms attended. We increased the number of home fire risk checks and customer satisfaction levels were high. The indicators we will be monitoring closely in 2014/15 are our Emergency Response Standards, the availability of retained fire appliances and the reduction in attendance at automatic false alarms ([link](#)).

We perform well when compared to similar Fire and Rescue Services – see our 2012-13 benchmark report against similar fire and rescue services ([link](#)) and the national Fire Statistics Monitor report ([link](#)).

Peer Challenge 2014

As part of a self improvement programme, the Service invited a team of peer assessors to provide external challenge to its self assessment of corporate capacity, operational capability, and the outcomes achieved for the communities in Norfolk. The peer team found the Service to have strong political and managerial leadership, good overall performance, and effective community engagement. Resilience and business continuity arrangements are robust and good use is made of collaborative working. Capital investment and the development of operational capability have enhanced outcomes for local people.

The peer team identified the need for the Service to develop a longer term vision and for strong leadership to be maintained through NCC's changes to governance arrangements and continued budget reductions. They said opportunities to reconfigure front line resources should be taken to deliver efficiencies and that scope exists to involve middle managers more and develop talent. The Service has published the Peer Challenge Report ([link](#)).

Signed: by Dan Roper, Cabinet Member for Public Protection

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Roper', with a long horizontal line extending to the right below the name.

Publication date: 25 March 2014

Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2014/15

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

Summary

Overview and Scrutiny Panel reports in November 2013 and January 2014 gave an initial view of service and budget planning for 2014/15. This report covers the next stage of delivery through the 2014/15 Fire and Rescue Service Plan.

Activity identified within the draft Service Plan is restricted to 2014/15. This is in recognition of the Council approaching the start of the first year of its three year programme of work emerging from the Norfolk: Putting People First budget consultation exercise. It also reflects some level of financial planning prudence given the uncertainty around future planning assumptions and the funding levels under the next Comprehensive Spending Review and the outcome of the General Election in May 2015.

The Service's priorities have been informed by the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Board's review of its services and those projects underway as part of Fire Ahead. Fire Ahead is the Fire and Rescue's element of Norfolk: Putting People First consultation, and also the Fire and Rescue Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2014/17. The projects listed in the Service Plan also cover internal projects to realise savings and continue to streamline the Service. The Board considered the Fire and Rescue National Framework issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in July 2012. The Service's objectives and priorities remain consistent and were agreed by the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel in November 2013.

The Service remains flexible and responsive to new challenges. Fire Ahead projects such as Priority Based Budgeting, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and the Operational Improvement Programme are identifying the budget savings for the three years ahead whilst shaping the services to be provided to the communities of Norfolk and planning the details of operational delivery. The Service continues to work closely with other emergency services and local partner agencies to ensure joint working focuses on priorities.

The Fire and Rescue Service Plan forms the Fire and Rescue Authority's IRMP annual action plan and is attached as Appendix A.

Action Required

- Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members are invited to review the draft Fire and Rescue Service Plan and to consider any service areas for further scrutiny and monitoring.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members received reports in November 2013 and January 2014 giving an initial view of service and budget planning for 2014/15. This report covers the next stage of delivery through the 2014/15 Fire and Rescue Service Plan. It forms the Fire and Rescue Authority's IRMP annual Action Plan. A copy of the draft Fire and Rescue Service Plan is attached as Appendix A of this report.

2. Changes for 2014/15

- 2.1. Service Plans are continuing to follow the Single Planning Process resulting in simpler more streamlined plans. It is important to note that activity within the Service Plan has been restricted to 2014/15. This is in recognition of the Council approaching the start of the first year of its three year programme of work emerging from the Norfolk: Putting People First budget consultation exercise. It also reflects some level of uncertainty around future planning assumptions and the funding levels under the next Comprehensive Spending Review.
- 2.2. The Service's priorities have been informed by the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Board's review of its services and those projects underway as part of Fire Ahead. Fire Ahead is the Fire and Rescue's element of Norfolk: Putting People First consultation, and also the Fire and Rescue Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014/17. The projects listed in the Service Plan also cover internal projects to realise savings and continue to streamline the Service. The Board considered the Fire and Rescue National Framework issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in July 2012. The Service's objectives and priorities remain consistent and were agreed by the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel in November 2013.
- 2.3. Members will be familiar with the Fire and Rescue's performance dashboard which forms part of the performance framework agreed by Cabinet in May 2011 under the previous administration. The dashboard complements the Service Plan by providing a snapshot of performance for the department using service priorities to provide an at a glance approach to performance.
- 2.4. The dashboard, which can be found at the back of the draft Service Plan, represents the suite of measures that give an overview of the Fire and Rescue Service's performance. It is based on Quarter 3 data (from April – December 2013).

3. Risks/Pressures

- 3.1. Risks against achieving Service objectives have been identified within the Fire and Rescue Service's risk register and they are monitored on a quarterly basis.

4. Resource Implications

4.1. Finance:

Issues are addressed within the draft Service Plan and were reported to November and January Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

4.2. Staff:

Issues are addressed within the draft Service Plan.

4.3. Property:

Issues are addressed within the draft Service Plan.

4.4. IT:

Issues are addressed within the draft Service Plan.

5. Other Implications

5.1. Legal Implications:

Legal implications are considered throughout the service and budget planning process.

5.2. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):

This report provides summary performance information on a wide range of activities monitored by the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Some of these activities have a potential impact on residents or staff from one or more protected groups. Where this is the case, an equality assessment has been undertaken as part of the project planning process to identify any issues relevant to service planning. This enables the Council to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Details of equality assessments are available from the project lead for the relevant area of work, or alternatively, please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships team.

5.3. Any other implications: Officers have considered all the implications which Members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

6. Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

6.1. Issues are addressed within equality assessments.

7. Risk Implications/Assessment

7.1. Relevant risks and opportunities have been identified within the draft Service Plan.

8. Alternative Options

8.1. None.

Action Required

Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members are invited to review the Fire and Rescue draft Service Plan and to consider any service areas for further scrutiny and monitoring.

Background Papers

None.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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Fire and Rescue

Draft Service Plan 2014-15

Appendix A

Chief Fire Officer Nigel Williams

Signed:

 **Norfolk** County Council
@ your service

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The audience for this plan are: Staff; Members and major stakeholders.

1. Our Service

Service profile

Our county

Norfolk is a largely rural county. It has 90 miles of coast, 250 miles of waterways, 6,256 miles of roads and 541 parishes. There are over 287 conservation areas, more than 10,567 listed buildings and more than 430 scheduled ancient monuments. The Norfolk Broads cover 303 square kilometres of Norfolk and a small part of Suffolk and have a population of around 6,400. Tourism is a major source of income (£2,677 million pa), and research by Tourism South East estimates in 2010 there were 3,968,000 staying trips and 27,274,000 day trips to Norfolk.

Norfolk has borders with Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire to the west and southwest and Suffolk to the south. Its northern and eastern boundaries are the North Sea coast, including The Wash.

Our customers

The population of Norfolk is 857,888 according to the [2011 Census](#) compared with 796,700 in 2001. The area is 537,085 hectares (fifth largest of the 34 non-metropolitan counties in England) and the population density is 1.6 persons per hectare (tenth lowest). Norfolk's population has a relatively elderly age profile. Compared with England and Wales it has higher proportions of people aged 50 and over and also lower proportions in all the younger age groups.

Around 38 per cent of the County's population live in the three major built up areas of Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn with a further 18 per cent in the market towns. Around 40 per cent live in parishes of over 300 population and the remaining 4 per cent in parishes with less than 300. According to the 'Rural and Urban Area Classification 2004', 32 per cent of Norfolk wards are classified as urban, 22 per cent are town and fringe, and 46 per cent are village, hamlet and isolated dwellings. An estimated 46 per cent of people live in urban wards, 24 per cent in town and fringe and 30 per cent in village, hamlet and isolated dwellings.

There are 51 Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Norfolk that are within the twenty percent most deprived in England. Of these, 29 are in the top ten percent most deprived in England, out of a total of 530 LSOAs in the County. The most deprived LSOA in the County is in Yarmouth, which is ranked 201st most deprived LSOA in England from a total of 32,482 (LSOAs are small geographical areas designed for the collection and publication of small area statistics by the Office for National Statistics).

Since 2002 there have been over 45,000 National Insurance Number (NIN) registrations for Norfolk to adult overseas nationals entering the UK. Of these 20% are Polish, 13% are Portuguese and 13% are Lithuanian.

In line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties Regulations 2011), information about our customers in terms of their protected characteristics - age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation - is available on our website in the document entitled Meeting our Equality Duty. This information will be refreshed each year.

What we deliver for Norfolk

Our main service activities are:

Prevention

- Carrying out home fire risk checks for those from vulnerable groups who are at higher risk of fire in the home.
- Delivering road safety education to high risk groups and child car seat safety checks.
- Working with young people at risk of being excluded and working with partners to reduce opportunities for arson.
- Delivering fire safety education to the general public, school children, the public sector and employees.
- Engaging with and developing links with diverse communities to ensure that fire safety messages are accessible and meet their specific needs.

Protection

- Undertaking regulatory fire safety inspections in our highest risk non-domestic premises.
- Enforcing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and enforcing the regulatory requirements for the safe storage of petroleum and explosives.
- Supporting Local Authorities in enforcing fire safety standards in homes in multiple occupation and shared housing.
- Reducing the number of false alarm attendance by the Service.
- Providing advice to businesses on fire prevention.
- Promoting domestic and non-domestic sprinklers.
- Carrying out fire investigations.

Response

- Responding to emergency calls relating to fires, road traffic collisions, water rescue, national emergencies and other calls for assistance.
- Ensuring firefighters and incident commanders are competent and operate safely.
- Being prepared for major incidents.
- Ensuring business continuity plans are up to date and tested.

The table below shows the number of emergency calls attended in 2012/13 compared to 2009/10.

Call Type	Calls Attended 2009-10	Calls Attended 2012-13	Reductions Achieved
Automatic False Alarms (AFAs)	2,673	1,899	-29.0%
False alarms good intent	1,077	857	-20.4%
Hoax calls	89	64	-28.1%
Total False Alarms	3,839	2,820	-26.5%
Significant fires (Primary)	1,567	1,211	-22.7%

Small fires (Secondary and Chimney)	1,689	940	-44.3%
Assisting other Services	22	14	-36.4%
Total fires	3,278	2,165	-34.0%
Non-fire incidents (Special Services)	2,769	1,500	-45.8%
Total incidents attended	9,886	6,485	-34.4%

Each year we carry out approximately:

- 3,500 home fire risk checks, with smoke detector fits for at risk groups.
- School visits to over 7,000 children.
- Crucial Crew events covering almost 5,000 children.
- 1,250 fire safety audits.

Our people

The Service has an establishment of 928.60 posts, of which 287.80 are uniform, 96.80 are non-uniform and 544 are retained firefighters. Wholetime personnel are based at fire and rescue stations in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Thetford and wholetime officers are located around the county. Retained firefighters are based at retained firefighter fire and rescue stations in 35 market towns and villages across the county, at King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Thetford and at one station in Norwich.

The last four years has brought significant change to staff employed by the Service. These include changes to rostering systems, the loss of staff through redundancy and the redeployment of appliances and staff in different locations. The pace of change continued during 2013/14 driven by a Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) exercise. The PBB process uses a risk based approach to setting service levels and determining resource requirements within available budgets. The PBB2 process resulted in savings of £162k being identified for 2013/14. The PBB3 process has identified savings of £1.770M for 2014/15. The Service is undertaking Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) on many of its key processes that support front line services to identify more efficient ways of working. PBB and BPR, together with the Service's Fire Ahead transformation programme, will shape workforce planning from 2014/15 onwards. Other drivers will continue to ensure our people are appropriately trained to operate safely and deployed to deliver maximum productivity.

Information about our staff in terms of their protected characteristics is detailed on our website in the document entitled Meeting our Equality Duty and is updated annually.

Our partners

The Fire and Rescue Service has developed extensive partnership arrangements with a wide range of stakeholders in order to deliver its services more effectively. Our main partners are the other emergency services such as Norfolk Constabulary and the East of England of England Ambulance Service. As a County Council service we work very

closely with Trading Standards, Adult Social Services and the Youth Offending Team. We also work with the District Councils, Housing Associations, voluntary and community groups.

(a) Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership (CCSP)

We work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure resources are targeted where most needed in the community. The reduction of crime and disorder remains a key outcome for the Fire and Rescue Service. We continue to be active members of the Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership, working to prevent/reduce the opportunities for arson and anti social behaviour. We support the reduction of hate crimes by encouraging reporting of all hate incidents.

(b) Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF)

This is a multi agency partnership of category one and category two responders who work together to ensure Norfolk is prepared for major incidents and emergencies. Through the Forum we work in close co-operation with partners who include the Police, the Coastguard, NHS Trusts, hospitals, the East of England Ambulance Service, the Health Protection Agency, local City and District Councils and the Environment Agency. The NRF partners carry out emergency planning and training; put in place business continuity plans; make arrangements for informing the public about civil protection matters; share information and work with other local responders. In particular, the Fire and Rescue Service works closely with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) to prepare for major flood events.

(c) NORMIT

NORMIT is a mutual aid partnership between public organisations and private enterprise companies focusing on promoting resilience and business continuity within the business community in Norfolk against the impact of emergencies. This enables the wider community of Norfolk to better cope with emergencies.

(d) Norfolk Better Regulation Partnership

This is a partnership working group consisting of representatives from Norfolk organisations, whose aim includes securing the safety of citizens through regulatory activity and enforcement. It was established in 2004 under Norfolk Ambition, Norfolk's Community Strategy, to create and implement a strategy to reduce the risk of personal harm to people who live, work, visit or participate in leisure activities in Norfolk by ensuring they are provided with safe goods, accommodation and services. The Fire and Rescue Service plays a key role in inspecting commercial premises and accommodation, and also carries out fire safety campaigns around bonfire night and Christmas.

(e) Operational Partnership Teams

Operating under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the seven district-based Operational Partnership Teams (OPTs) consist of Police staff co-located with local authority staff. Through the exchange of information and intelligence the team identifies criminal activity that is causing concern and targets multi agency resources to address the issues. We attend the strategic level meets and our involvement focuses on problem solving.

Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) – Fire and Rescue Community Fire Protection Station Managers attend both the County and District level SAGs. These take a strategic outlook for large public events and plan to ensure the events run safely.

(f) Community Cohesion Strategic Group

We work with partners of the Community Cohesion Strategic Group to promote community cohesion and equality in Norfolk, and also to deliver our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.

(g) East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Collaboration

The Service successfully bid for significant funding levels from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to lead on the East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Collaboration project. It will link the four Fire and Rescue Control rooms of Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire and Humberside. This is an ambitious project and will improve the robustness and resilience of the control room functions of the four Fire and Rescue Services and lead to cost savings overall. The project will conclude in May 2015.

(h) Other partners

The Fire and Rescue Service works in partnership with numerous other organisations to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies within the county. For example, the British Red Cross, Poppy Calls and some Housing Associations carry out Home Fire Risk Checks on our behalf. We work with the Prince's Trust to support young people. We work with other agencies on Crucial Crew events which raise awareness of safety issues with young people.

Where and how we work

The Fire and Rescue Service is managed by the Chief Fire Officer who, as a statutory Officer of the Council, reports to Norfolk County Council's Chief Executive* (*currently subject to appointment). The Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel scrutinises decisions taken by the Fire and Rescue Service and by the Cabinet Member for Public Protection.

The Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters is in Hethersett. The service is delivered through 41 fire stations (2 wholetime only, 3 wholetime/retained firefighter, 1 day duty crew/retained firefighter and 35 retained firefighter) and area offices located across the county. The Service is structured into the following departments and teams:

- Operations including Eastern District, Central District, Southern District, Western District and the Control Room.
- Human Resources including Office Services and Pay Section.
- Community Safety and Engagement including Equality and Diversity, Arson Reduction and Youth Development.
- Community Fire Protection.
- Training and Development.
- Integrated Risk Management including the Fire Intelligence Unit, Business Process Re-engineering, Business Continuity and Community Risk Register.
- Standards including Technical Services and Resilience.
- Resources including Procurement (premises, water and critical equipment), Fleet, Health and Safety and ICT.
- Fire Ahead including Programme Management, Internal Communications and Service Development Support.

Service review

Our planning approach

Fire and Rescue Services are required to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) on a regular basis which identifies the foreseeable community risks within Norfolk. This process enables the Service to map out the risks within the community, including those at higher risk from fire or other emergencies, and target operational resources to where they are most needed. Previously the IRMP was taken forward to Members as the Safety Plan and the Service is currently implementing the recommendations of the Safety Plan 2011/14. During 2013, a new draft IRMP for 2014/17 was developed and was subject to public consultation. The draft IRMP contained two proposals:

1. Changes to the provision of free domestic smoke detectors: We propose that we will no longer supply and fit domestic smoke detectors with effect from 1 April 2014 or when our existing stocks run out – if we have stock left after the 1 April 2014. If our proposal were to go ahead Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service will continue to carry out Home Fire Risk Checks and then advise people what type of smoke detector they need, where it should be sited and local suppliers. However, we would no longer be able to supply or fit domestic smoke detectors. We anticipate that this will save £80,000 in 2014/15. At the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel in January 2014, this proposal was amended to: The Service will purchase a stock of smoke detectors and continue to supply and fit them until March 2015, creating time for alternative funding options to be developed and assessed. If no alternative funding options are identified, the Service will no longer supply and fit domestic smoke detectors with effect from 1 April 2015 or when existing stocks run out – if the Service has no stock left after the 1 April 2015. From 1 April 2015, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service will continue to carry out Home Fire Risk Checks and then advise people what type of smoke detector they need, where it should be sited and local suppliers. However, it will no longer be able to supply or fit domestic smoke detectors.
2. Purchasing different fire vehicles for some fire stations: The proposal is to change the type of fire engine that is used at 12 of the Retained Duty fire stations (part time) across the County.
 - a) 6 retained duty stations currently have 2 fire engines, which will be replaced with one new large fire engine capable of seating up to 9 firefighters and one new lightweight 4X4 vehicle capable of carrying 5 firefighters with 1 tonne of equipment including breathing apparatus. This arrangement will help ensure that we are able to send the right type of fire engine for the incident that has occurred. It will also save money as we are able to use some smaller vehicles. The 6 fire stations are Cromer; Diss; Dereham; Fakenham; Sandringham; and Wymondham.
 - b) Fire engines at the following fire stations are to be replaced by compact fire engines: Earlham; Gorleston; Reepham; Heacham; Hetherset; and Terrington. A compact fire engine looks like a normal fire engine but is smaller. It has seating for up to 7 personnel and can attend the full range of incidents, albeit with a reduced equipment inventory. This proposal will contribute to saving more than £1 million over three years, as part of a wider programme of buying fire engines using government grants, rather than leasing them using NCC revenue funds.

This Service Plan forms the annual Action Plan for the IRMP and lists the main actions identified through the Peer Challenge. It also contains the projects and actions arising from the annual Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) exercise which enables Senior Managers to confirm priorities for the coming year and align resources to them. PBB is also being used as a mechanism to identify budget savings. This is complemented by a Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) process through which services will then be reshaped to run more efficiently.

The combination of the IRMP, PBB and BPR processes mean the Service is better placed to meet the annual budget and service planning round dates set out by the County Council.

How we are performing including key risks and key drivers for our Service

Going into 2014/15 the Service faces challenges nationally and locally.

Key national drivers

- (a) Financial pressures - The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced his Autumn Statement on the 5 December 2013. Following the statement, the Council's planning assumptions remained broadly the same. The Chancellor confirmed that key announcements of an additional £3bn cuts to public sector funding, would not affect Local Government. The Fire and Rescue Service is required to make £2.171M savings over the next three years: 2014/15 £1.770M; 2015/16 £0.074M; and 2016/17 £0.326M.
- (b) Fire and Rescue Services nationally remain directly affected by continuing national security threats. The Strategic Defence Review articulated these threats, which include, alongside terrorism, natural hazards, principal amongst which is the threat of coastal flooding.
- (c) The Government has published its Fire and Rescue National Framework in July 2012 which outlines the Government's expectations for Fire and Rescue Services. The Framework documents typically span three years. The key elements of the document are summarised below:
 - Keep it local - develop the majority of services in response to local needs, not national expectations (with the exception of national resilience).
 - Partnership working - work with partners particularly around the prevention agenda, such as home fire risk checks for vulnerable people.
 - Transparency - ensure greater accountability to the local population, through scrutiny arrangements and the provision of key information to the public.
 - Involvement - involve local people in service planning and development.
 - Standardised approaches - use common standards and practices across Fire and Rescue Services, making it possible to share resources and co-ordinate approaches to large-scale incidents.
- (d) The Equality Act 2010 places legal obligations on the Service called the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means that the way we deliver services and our employment practices must have due regard to meeting the equality duties under the Act and Specific Duties Regulations 2011.
- (e) The LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge provides Fire and Rescue Services with an opportunity to drive their own improvement agenda. The Service underwent a Peer Challenge in January 2014 and used the process to identify areas of strength and for focus. Actions are included in the project lists in pages 18–25.
- (f) The Service performs well (above average) for most performance indicators when compared to similar Fire and Rescue Services. However, the Service is keeping a

watching brief on deliberate fires, staff sickness absence, accidental dwelling fires and accidental non-domestic dwelling fires, against which performance is less strong.

Key local performance drivers

Performance figures focus on measures where improvement is required, or where significant changes took place to service delivery methods. They are based on data from 1 April 2013 to 30 December 2013 (Q3).

(a) Prevention

Accidental dwelling fire injuries - From April to December 2013 the number of people sustaining injuries at accidental has risen to 24 - a rate of 2.79 per 100,000 population. The end of year target (19 injuries, rate of 2.21) has already been reached.

Road traffic collisions - A Fire Ahead project called Trauma Care is underway to further improve joint working with emergency services at RTCs. One element of this project is to improve mobilising arrangements. Since July 2013 this process has been automated and the Service is now attending an increased level of call outs.

(b) Protection

Unwanted fire signals - Every year Fire and Rescue Services send fire appliances to thousands of emergency calls to premises following the activation of Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) systems. Over 95% of these calls are false alarms, or are caused by system/design faults. Through a change in attendance policy, the Service has reduced its attendance to AFAs by 20% since April 2013 when compared with April to December 2012 (1,299 calls in 2013 compared to 1,635 in 2012). A further change to the attendance policy will be put to Cabinet for approval during 2014/15.

Non-domestic premises fires - There were 147 fires in non-domestic premises between April and December 2013, a rate 1.71 per 10,000 population. It is a slight increase - only three more fires than recorded for April to December 2012 when there were 144 accidental fires in non-domestic properties - rate 1.67.

(c) Response

Retained Duty System availability - Retained firefighter availability proved challenging during 2013/14. Performance continued to decline and the cumulative figure for RDS availability from April to December 2013 was 83.9%. This is the lowest performance in three and a half years. Western District continues to have the greatest issue with availability below 80% all year and continuing to worsen. The rural nature of Western area means that ensuring sufficient retained firefighter availability has been a long standing challenge.

We held three retained firefighter recruitment days in 2013 and recruited 34 staff. Some stations run their own open days or meet with local employers to encourage people to become retained firefighters, and for employers to support this.

Emergency Response Standards - The Service has a target is to attend 80% or more of life risk calls within the Emergency Response Standards (ERS). Performance against the ERS is declining and is below the target of 80%. Between April and December 2013 the cumulative figure was 78.5% (compared to 82.4% for the same period the previous year).

How we respond to and manage incidents - The Service has embarked on a significant change programme in relation to operational response delivery. The Operational Improvement Programme is driven by: a new IRMP, including changes to frontline fleet; a review of incident command system capacity; budget savings for 2014/17; a need to update mobilising arrangements and pre-determined attendances (BMO 0/7); the East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Collaboration project and the Operational Readiness project which has highlighted ongoing issues with RDS availability. Collectively these drivers require the Service to optimise operational response arrangements to ensure the capacity of our people and the capabilities of our operational fleet and equipment are best utilised to respond and attend to operational emergencies. The project is due to be completed by April 2015.

(d) People

Sickness absence - At the end of December 2013 the cumulative average days lost to sickness per FTE was 7.24 days - above the end of year target of 7 days and 0.58 days more than the cumulative total recorded at the end of December in 2012 (6.43 days). Sickness absence varies according to employment contract type and is a complex management issue. To address it the Service has recently implemented a new Sickness Absence Management policy.

(e) Manage

Performance management - The Service introduced a new performance monitoring system in April 2012. LiveView enables all staff to look at performance measures relevant to their area of work and helps managers to direct resources according to the information they view. Operational data is updated live, other data is updated monthly and/or quarterly. LiveView is well used and providing managers with useful information.

(g) **Financial pressures** - As a County Council Service the Fire and Rescue Service's response to the budget cuts is the implementation of a change programme called Fire Ahead. The Service delivered savings of £1.512M in 2012/13 and £0.162M in 2013/14. The Fire and Rescue Service is required to make £2.171M savings over the next three years: 2014/15 £1.770M; 2015/16 £0.074M; and 2016/17 £0.326M.

(f) Community

Community engagement - We are working with community volunteers to increase the number of dwellings with working smoke detectors. We have also established links with age, disability, faith, LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] and BAME [black and minority ethnic] led community groups to raise awareness of our services and fire safety, encourage mutual understanding and promote employment opportunities within the Service. We have worked with other Fire and Rescue Services in the Eastern Region, the Asian Fire Service Association, Stonewall, Networking Women in the Fire Service and Age UK to develop information for our staff about the diverse people they serve and work with.

Maintained and improved performance

Performance figures in this section focus on measures where performance was maintained or improved. They are based on the financial year 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 (Q4).

(a) Prevention

Accidental dwelling fires and injuries - There were 331 accidental dwelling fires between April and December 2013, a rate of 8.27 per 10,000 dwellings. This indicator is on track to achieve the target of 12.02. However the direction of travel is worse as the number of accidental fires is higher than recorded for April to December 2012, when there were 314 fires - a rate of 7.90.

Home Fire Risk Checks (HFRCs) - The Service has a home fire risk check (HFRC) programme targeted at vulnerable people at higher risk of death from fire in their homes. During 2012/13 3,592 HFRCs were delivered. Between April and December 2013 2,995 HFRCs have been carried out, on track to deliver the target of 3,500. An increasing number of HFRCs are being carried out by the Service's 46 community volunteers. They support fire safety education and other prevention activities as the Service has limited resources to support this work, particularly in rural areas. This capacity issue is acknowledged in the draft IRMP 2014/17 and the Service will embark on identifying alternative funding sources for smoke alarm purchase.

In addition, the Service will continue to work closely with NCC Community Services (Adult Social Care) and with mental health to ensure the risk of fire to the most vulnerable is considered and prevention support provided. The Service has established bite-size training for carers and domiciliary workers looking after people in the community that will enable them to identify fire risks and take immediate action. The Service also delivers fire safety education to young people in schools and through Crucial Crew. Now in its eleventh year, Crucial Crew has been attended by 32,000 children and is key to improving fire safety in homes across Norfolk.

Arson - Arson is at a low level. Five hundred and twenty six deliberate fires were attended between April and December 2013 (a rate of 6.12 per 10,000 population). This low level can be attributed to several factors. There has been an increased focus on arson reduction, such as working closely with the Police to identify perpetrators. The Service has adopted a multi-agency approach to manage vacant properties and thereby reduce the risk of arson at premises.

The Service has a successful fire-setters intervention programme that targets people who deliberately start fires and aims to stop them from doing it again. They are mainly teenagers and adults. Officers visit prisons and secure units to speak to those people who have committed arson. The Service receives referrals from youth offending teams, Community Services, the Police, young offenders' institutes and mental health organisations and occasionally from parents. From April to December 2013, 14 interventions have been completed and advice was given in a further 9 instances. Post intervention reoffending rates are very low.

(b) Protection

Risk based inspection programme - The Service is required under the National Framework to operate a risk based audit programme. Norfolk FRS is performing well regarding the management of fire risk in non-domestic premises rated as high or very high risk such as care homes and hotels. The audit programme is monitored monthly and the Service has maintained performance above 98% from April to December 2013.

(c) Response

Answering 999 calls - 97% of all 999 emergency calls are answered within five seconds between April and December 2013. This is comparable with 2012/13 (97.5%) and 2011/12 (96.5%).

Economic cost of fire to Norfolk - Using the Government's Fire Services Emergency Cover model, the annual operational cost of fire to Norfolk is £206M.

(d) People

Training - Over the last 12 months the Training Centre has developed some more cost effective training methods. It is delivering training lectures via the intranet to several stations at a time on drill nights. It is also carrying out more training at King's Lynn, particularly for retained firefighters at the weekends. This reduces travel time and costs for retained firefighters in the West and encourages attendance. On the 31 December 2013, 87.6% of operational firefighters, crew managers and watch managers were competent and on full duties. This figure is increasing on a monthly basis.

(e) Manage

Cost of head per population - When compared to 13 similar Fire and Rescue Services, Norfolk is among the cheapest, costing £28.61 per head of population. The group average is £35.99 and the national average is £39.64. The cheapest is £26.75 (Suffolk) and the most expensive is £44.77 (East Sussex).

Risks

County wide risks - The context within which the County Council is operating is set out in the County Council Plan 2013/16 ([link](#)). It considers the challenge of delivering services to a growing and also ageing population, with increasingly diverse ethnicity, varying levels of deprivation and rising citizen demands. The Fire and Rescue Service's IRMP 2014/17 applies these issues to how it will deliver services while having a far smaller budget and resources to do so.

An example of this is the delivery of home fire risk checks. The County has an ageing population who are living longer, often alone and are more vulnerable. The Service has concentrated its resources on those most at risk from fire in the home and has developed a range of strategies, including a partnership with Adult Social Care and mental health, to identify those most vulnerable. The development of a network of community volunteers will enable communities to help themselves and provide a local solution to a local issue, and reduce the risks of dwelling fires.

Departmental risks - The Service risk register reflects those key business risks which if not managed appropriately, could result in the Service failing to achieve one or more of its key objectives and/or suffer a financial loss or reputational damage. The risks fall into two groups reflecting our focus on maintaining delivery of safety critical services to the public whilst delivering budgetary reductions. The risk register is reviewed quarterly and currently contains 11 risks.

Business Continuity

Norfolk County Council's overarching objective relating to business continuity is: To ensure the Council's services are resilient and able to continue and respond appropriately in the event of disruption or incident.

NCC is in the process of reviewing its business continuity framework and moving all departments onto a new business continuity platform which will improve the processes for managing business continuity. The NCC Resilience Team has re-launched the business impact analysis process. This will enable business critical activities to be identified, signed off and ensure processes continue to be in place to regularly test critical systems. The review of NCC's business continuity arrangements was completed in the Autumn of 2013.

The Fire and Rescue Service has robust business continuity plans in place and meets the following criteria set out by the County Council:

- (a) To review critical activities every two years, or following significant business change, and develop/implement actions to improve resilience. For Fire and Rescue the critical activities are: operations, resilience, Control, IT and Community Fire Protection. We reviewed these arrangements in February 2011. The next review is due during 2014 once NCC's new business continuity platform is operational.
- (b) To review and update business continuity plans as agreed by Departmental Senior Managers. Fire and Rescue plans are reviewed annually and will be re-examined from June - September 2014 following all the changes set out in (a).
- (c) To develop and engage with business continuity exercises as defined within NCC's business continuity framework. An example of compliance with this is our regular testing of fallback arrangements for the Control Room. Buddying arrangements have been put in place with Hertfordshire FRS Control Room and these are regularly tested. In January 2014 we tested our business continuity arrangements during a series of power outages for electrical upgrades.

2. Our priorities

The Fire and Rescue Authority confirmed the priorities for the Fire and Rescue Service in November 2012 and these remain unchanged in the new service planning round.

They are as follows:

Prevention

Objective: To prevent fires and other emergencies happening.

Priorities:

- Safer Homes - to reduce the rate of fires in the home and improve safety for those at high risk from fire.
- Safer Roads - use Road Traffic Collision reduction events to support

- partners in improving road safety.
- Safer Communities - use arson reduction events to reduce the number and impact of deliberately started fires.
- Volunteers - to establish a network of volunteers to support our education and prevention objectives.

Protection

Objective: To reduce the impact of fires and other emergencies.

Priorities:

- Safer premises - reduce the risk and impact of fires in non-domestic premises.
- Safer shared housing - supporting Local Authorities in enforcing fire safety standards in homes in multiple occupation and shared housing.
- Fewer false alarm calls - reduce the volume of false alarm calls to domestic and non-domestic premises.

Response

Objective: Respond effectively, efficiently and appropriately to calls for assistance.

Priorities:

- Operational Assurance - ensure stations are well prepared to respond to emergency incidents.
- Operational Availability - improve the availability of retained firefighter crews and response performance of all appliances.
- Operational Risk - reduce the risks when attending emergency incidents.
- Civil Contingencies - ensure we are well prepared for major incidents.

People

Objective: To build a diverse, skilled, safe and high performing workforce.

Priorities:

- Performance - build capacity to enable the organisation to achieve greater productivity and efficiency through improved performance.
- Competence - ensure the workforce is competent through training and development.
- Change - manage change effectively through a combination of effective staff development and briefings and efficient management of Service change projects.

Manage

Objective: To manage resources and assets responsibly and sustainably.

Priorities:

- Financial Management - ensure the organisation operates safely and effectively within budgetary constraints and maximises use of its assets through Priority Based Budgeting.
- Environmental Sustainability - use the Service's assets and resources sustainably to reduce the Service's energy use and carbon footprint.
- Performance Management - enable Managers to deliver services which are efficient and effective in supporting the strategic objectives of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.
- Business Continuity - ensure the Service is well prepared and monitors plans to maintain all critical aspects service delivery.

Community

Objective: To provide services that reflect the needs and expectations of the communities we serve.

Priorities:

- Meeting Community Needs - consulting with communities as part of a risk based approach to delivering services to meet community needs.
- Community Engagement - to engage with our communities to support Service objectives in ways that meet their different needs.
- Satisfaction with Services - listening to feedback and acting on compliments and complaints to ensure our services are of high quality and meet the needs of all our communities.

How our priorities help to deliver the County Council's three priorities

The Council's priorities are:

Excellence in education - We will champion our children and young people's right to an excellent education, training and preparation for employment because we believe they have the talent and ability to compete with the best. We firmly believe that every single child matters.

Real jobs - We will promote employment that offers security, opportunities and a good level of pay. We want real, sustainable jobs available throughout Norfolk.

Good infrastructure - We will make Norfolk a place where businesses can succeed and grow. We will promote improvements to our transport and technology infrastructure to make Norfolk a great place to do business.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service contribute to the Council's priorities through working with partners to help keep Norfolk safe.

Our budget

The budget for this Service

The Service has a base revenue budget of £29.556 m for 2014/15.

For a summary of our Service budget - see the following links:

Medium Term Financial Plan - this plan sets out the Council's financial strategy and planned allocation of resources at a department level over the next three years, including agreed changes to resources and the reasons for these (in the case of additional resources) or the actions to reduce costs/achieve savings (in the case of reductions in resources). All components of the plan are agreed by Members during the planning process or in the case of the budget itself by County Council in February.

Budget Book - The detailed budget book provides a summary of budget information, for easy reference. It more clearly helps answer questions about how the £600m is allocated across the Council's services and how the budget is managed (ie is the service mainly provided in-house with high proportion of staff costs or predominately commissioned externally). It can be used by Members and Managers to identify further questions/areas for analysis about spend and efficiency.

Budget savings

The following shows known budget savings relevant to the Service. Throughout this plan, any actions that will contribute to the delivery of these budget savings will be identified by the budget saving reference.

Description	Savings required		
	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
<u>Savings already identified</u> : savings from the lease budget; savings from revenue spend; and savings from the final year of 2010/13 IRMP.	1.770	0.074	0.326
<u>Additional savings</u> to be made from staffing budget.			
<u>Increased income</u> from Fleet department.			

4. Delivering our priorities

This section includes detail of actions that the Service will deliver in order to meet its priorities. Actions will contribute to delivery of priorities through various delivery mechanisms split into the following: Norfolk - Putting People First (the Council's organisational review and its transformation and efficiency programme), Commissioning activity, Change Management or Service Delivery. Activities may encompass several of these mechanisms as part of their general approach.

The following template includes provision to identify which delivery mechanism(s) each activity will employ.

Key	IRMP and Norfolk – Putting People First [IRMP]	Service Delivery [SD]
	Commissioning Activity [CA]	Continuous Improvement [CI] – includes actions from 2014 Peer Challenge

Service Objective	Prevention -To prevent fires and other emergencies happening.						
Lead	Karen Palframan - Brigade Manager (Service Delivery). Greg Preston - Group Manager (Community Safety and Engagement).						
Risks to achieving this objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to influence strategic partnerships to raise the profile of preventative work. • Insufficient data and intelligence on the county's risk profile. • Changes to the county's economic profile and individuals' circumstances. • Failure to gain access to high risk premises and to influence hard to reach people. • Capacity within the Service to prevent fires and other emergencies. • Significant reduction in Government funding for media campaigns and for domestic smoke detectors. 						
Action	Milestones	Delivery mechanism				Owner	Level funded from
		[IR MP]	[CA]	[SD]	[CI]		
Year 1 (2014-15)							
Seek to identify funding options for smoke alarm purchase and look for ways to extend smoke alarm fitting in the community beyond 2014/15.	Complete by March 2015.			Y		G Preston	

Service Objective	Protection - To reduce the impact of fires and other emergencies.						
Lead	Karen Palframan - Brigade Manager (Service Delivery). Richard Herrell - Group Manager (Community Fire Protection).						
Risks to achieving this objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal, lack or further reduction in number of staff with requisite skills to deliver regulatory audit and inspections. • Further reduction in CFP budget. • Loss of transport provision in District. • Premises data deficit (approx. 14,000 premises). • Failure of alarm receiving centres or commercial premises owners to reduce false alarm notifications. • Impact of serious regulatory breach requiring legal action, reduces capacity to deliver risk based audit programme. • Reduction in community fire protection skills over time. 						
Action	Milestones	Delivery mechanism				Owner	Level funded from
		[IR MP]	[CA]	[SD]	[CI]		
Year 1 (2014-15)							
AFA Reduction Phase 2b (Reduction in alarms and unwanted fire signals).	Date tbc 2014 – Go live of Phase 2b.	Y		Y		R Herrell	IRMP 2010/13

Service Objective	Response - Respond effectively, efficiently and appropriately to calls for assistance.						
Lead	Karen Palframan - Brigade Manager (Service Delivery). David Ashworth - Area Manager (Operations). Peter Holliday - Group Manager (IRMP).						
Risks to achieving this objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced availability of retained firefighter duty system staff due to changes in their personal circumstances. • Failure to meet emergency response standards due to changing call profile. • Increase in operational activity due to unforeseen circumstances. 						
Action	Milestones	Delivery mechanism				Owner	Level funded from
		[IR MP]	[CA]	[SD]	[CI]		
Year 1 (2014-15)							
Operational Improvement Programme	Options analysis - October 2014. Recommendations agreed by Board - December 2014. Implementation - January 2015.			Y		D Ashworth	
South Lynn Fire Station.	Build new fire and rescue station – December 2015.		Y			R Harold	NCC capital fund.
East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Collaboration.	Project underway and managed through external collaborative project Board - completion May 2015.			Y		K Palframan	DCLG Grant.
Co-responding	New project - details tbc.			Y		R Harold	
Water Rescue Programme	New project - details tbc, subject to national review of recent flooding.			Y		R Harold	Partly by DEFRA.

Service Objective	People - To build a diverse, skilled, safe and high performing workforce.						
Lead	Karen Palframan - Brigade Manager (Service Delivery). Jim Belcher - Group Manager (Training & Development). Lynn Major - Human Resources Manager.						
Risks to achieving this objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to deliver against a robust performance framework to manage and monitor performance. • Lack of a robust training and development programme for all operational and support staff. • Achieving and maintaining competency. • Failure to ensure recruitment reflects the community. 						
Action	Milestones	Delivery mechanism				Owner	Level funded from
		[IR MP]	[CA]	[SD]	[CI]		
Year 1 (2014-15)							
Live Fire Training	Identify site for Live Fire Training by March 2015.				Y	R Harold	
ICS Assessments	Undertake review of ICS Assessments programme by June 2014.				Y	D Ashworth	
Staff on full duties	Undertake review of processes for monitoring staff on full duties by June 2014.				Y	D Ashworth	

Service Objective	Manage - To manage resources and assets responsibly and sustainably.						
Lead	Nigel Williams - Chief Fire Officer. Roy Harold - Deputy Chief Officer. Stuart Horth - Temporary Area Manager (Resources).						
Risks to achieving this objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased global commodity prices pushing up procurement costs. • Higher interest rates making capital borrowing more expensive. • Supply chain failure. • Increased fuel and energy costs. • Failure of staff to make a contribution and reduce their use of energy and assets. 						
Action	Milestones	Delivery mechanism				Owner	Level funded from
		[IR MP]	[CA]	[SD]	[CI]		
Year 1 (2014-15)							
Asset Management System	Go live with PPE/Supplies system - June 2014. Go live with Critical Equipment system - June 2014. Go live with all other systems.				Y	R Harold	
Budget Manager and Priority Based Budgeting 4	April 2014 - initial, developed and service level option rating. June 2015 - Project close.	Y				R Harold	
Standard Operating Procedures	This collaborative project involves fire and rescue services from the south east of England. It is managed externally.				Y	R Harold	
Information Management Strategy	New project - details tbc.				Y	L Britzman	

Service Objective	Community - To provide services that reflect the needs and expectations of the communities we serve.						
Lead	Karen Palframan - Brigade Manager (Service Delivery). Greg Preston - Group Manager (Community Safety and Engagement). Jim Belcher - Group Manager (Training and Development).						
Risks to achieving this objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sufficient choice for customers to access services and bespoke services to meet individuals' needs. • Inadequate mechanisms in place to engage the community. • Lack of effective data and intelligence to inform service delivery. • Insufficient forward planning using social and behaviour profiling. 						
Action	Milestones	Delivery mechanism				Owner	Level funded from
		[IR MP]	[CA]	[SD]	[CI]		
Year 1 (2014-15)							
IRMP	Deliver actions from the IRMP by March 2017.	Y				R Harold	
Statement of Assurance	Publish the Statement of Assurance 2014/15 by March 2015.				Y	R Harold	
Peer Challenge	Publish the Peer Challenge report by April 2014.				Y	K Palframan	

Appendix 1: Norfolk Fire and Rescue Performance Board Dashboard: April to December 2013 (Q3)

Delivering Fire Ahead					
Overall Assessment of programme status:			GREEN		
Dashboard Assessment by Programme					
Programme	Overall	Timescales	Benefits	Budget	Resources
Fire Ahead Projects					
Priority Based Budgeting Phase 3	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Trauma Care	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
IRMP	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Asset Management System	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber
Operational Improvement Programme	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Peer Challenge	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Other Key Projects					
Station Refurbishment Programme	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Service performance									
Measure	Q3 2012/13	Q4 2012/13	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Latest Value	Latest Target	Direction of travel	Latest rating	End of year target
Prevention									
1 - Number of home fire risk checks completed for people at higher risk [M].	2709	3573	1041	1954	2995	2625	↕	Green	3500
3 - Number of road casualty reduction events aimed at future drivers [M].	21	27	11	13	28	14	↕	Green	21
Protection									
4 - % Of very high and high risk non-domestic premises audited [M].	99%	100%	100%	98%	100%	95%	➡	Green	95%
Response									
6a - Number of risk site inspections overdue (as at 30/12/2013) [M].	5	4	2	2	7	0	↘	Red	0
7 - % OP25 operational reviews completed [M].	92.8%	91.5%	100%	96.7%	95.6% (April to Oct)	90%	↕	Green	90%
8 - % Of total hours retained appliances are on the run [M].	87.4%	87.7%	85.1 %	84%	83.9%	90%	↘	Red	90%
10 - Performance against our Emergency Response Standards [M].	82.4%	81.8%	79.7%	78.3%	78.5%	80%+	↘	Amber	80%+

Managing our resources									
Measure	Q3 2012/13	Q4 2012/13	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Latest Value	Latest Target	Direction of travel	Latest rating	End of year target
Managing the budget									
15 - Projected budget spend against revenue budget [M].	99.1%	99.2%	100%	100%	100%	100%	↑	Green	100%
16 - Projected cashable efficiency savings (£189,000 in 2013-14) [M].	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	→	Green	100%
17 - Spend against profiled capital budget [M].	48.4%	94.1%	1.8%	4.5%	82.6%	75%	↑	Green	100%
20 - NFRS Premises related costs per FTE [A] (2012/13 data).	£1925	£1925	n/a	n/a	£1925	Surv.	↓	Surv.	Surv.
Sustainability									
51 - % carbon dioxide emissions from automatically metered NFRS buildings compared to respective 2008/9 baseline [M].	.n/a	NEW for 2013/14	75.6%	71.8%	74.1% (Jan13 to Dec13)	Surv.	↓	Surv.	Surv.
Organisational productivity									
22 - Average days lost to sickness per FTE staff [Q] (2013/14 data) (as at 31/12/13).	6.43	9.04	2.44	4.70	7.24	5.25	↔	Red	7.0
24 - Number of RIDDOR events (7+ days) [M].	14	18	3	6	9	<17	↓	Green	22
25 - % Appraisals completed [M].	79%	90.6%	67.5%	83.9%	86.8%	90%	↓	Green	90%
Key risks from the Service Risk Register: Prospects against mitigation									
RM13974 Failure to assure that standards of operational competency for fires in the built environment [Q].	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	n/a	→	Amber	n/a
RM14122 NFRS Shortage of emergency response personnel including key incident managers through industrial action [Q].	-	-	NEW	Amber	Amber	n/a	n/a	Amber	n/a
RM14030 Failure to manage budgets effectively over the next Comprehensive Spending Review [Q].	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red	Red	n/a	↔	Red	n/a
RM 14031 Failure to meet public expectation during Integrated Risk Management Process [Q].	-	-	NEW	Amber	Amber	n/a	→	Amber	n/a




RM14032 NFRS Failure of information IT Security [Q].	-	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	n/a	➡	Amber	n/a
RM14064 Financial liability for P/T RDS firefighters [Q].	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	n/a	➡	Amber	n/a
RM14117 NFRS Failure to implement the Action Plan following the Safety Management Audit [Q].	-	-	NEW	Amber	Amber	n/a	➡	Amber	n/a
RM14118 NFRS Failure to manage resources and assets [Q].	-	-	NEW	Amber	Amber	n/a	n/a	Amber	n/a
RM14119 NFRS Failure to secure availability of operational individuals and crews [Q].	-	-	NEW	Amber	Amber	n/a	n/a	Amber	n/a

Outcomes for Norfolk people

Measure	Q3 2012/13	Q4 2012/13	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Latest Value	Latest Target	Direction of travel	Latest rating	End of year target
People's view on our services									
27a - Annual satisfaction with our services [A] (Dec 12/Jan 13 = 79%).	-	80% (Feb/Mar 2012)	-	-	80% (Feb/Mar 2012)	Surv.	↑	Surv.	Surv.
28 - Number of level 2 Complaints [M].	3	3	0	0	1	3	↓	Green	3
29 - Number of compliments received [M].	59	84	15	35	57	1	↓	Green	1>
Accessing the service including advice, information and signposting services									
30 - % of 999 calls answered within 5 seconds [M].	97.5%	97.5%	97.7%	96.7%	97%	95%	↔	Green	95%
31 - % of Freedom of Information Requests dealt with in timescale [M].	100%	100%	100%	68%	78.2%	100%	↔	Red	100%
Delivering Safety Plan Outcomes - Prevention									
32 - Rate of accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 dwellings [M].	7.90	10.97	2.62	4.77	8.27	9.02	↔	Green	12.02
36a - Rate of deaths in accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population as recorded in IRS. The number of deaths is shown in brackets [M].	0.35 (3)	0.46 (4)	0.35 (3)	0.47 (4)	0.47 (4)	Surv.	↑	Surv.	Surv.
36b - Rate of deaths in accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 as confirmed by the Coroner. The number of deaths is shown in brackets [varies].	.-	0.46 (4)	-	-	0.35 (3)	Surv.	↑	Surv.	Surv.
37 - Rate of injuries in accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population (No. of people injured in brackets) [M].	2.55 (22)	3.25 (28)	0.81 (7)	1.86 (16)	2.79 (24)	1.66 (14.25)	↔	Red	2.21 (19)
50 - Rate of arson incidents attended per 10,000 population [M].	n/a	n/a	2.03	4.88	6.12	10.8	↓	Green	14.45
Delivering Safety Plan Outcomes - Protection									
33 - Number of unwanted false alarm calls mobilised to [M].	1635	2065	403	870	1299	1458	↓	Green	1944
38 - Rate of accidental fires in non-domestic premises per 10,000 population [M].	1.67	2.21	0.51	1.19	1.71	1.70	↔	Amber	2.26

47a - Rate of deaths in accidental non-domestic premises fires per 100,000 population as recorded in IRS [M].	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	Surv.	➡	Surv.	Surv.
48 - Rate of injuries in accidental non-domestic premises fires (Number of people injured in brackets) [M].	0.12 (1)	0.23 (2)	0.12 (1)	0.23 (2)	0.35 (3)	0.44 (3.75)	🚨	Green	0.58 (5)
Delivering Safety Plan Outcomes - Response									
41 - Estimated economic cost of fire to Norfolk £M [A] (2011/12= £155M).	-	£206M	-	-	£206M	Surv.	⬆	Surv.	Surv.
Delivering Safety Plan Outcomes - Manage									
42 - Cost per head of population compared to family group* median [A] (2011/12 NFRS=£32.89, FG median= £35.70).	£28.61 (2012/13)	£28.61 (2012/13)	-	-	£28.61 (2012/13)	<£35.99 (2012/13)	👍	Green	<£35.99 (2012/13)

***Family Group** - West Sussex, East Sussex, Durham and Darlington, Bedfordshire and Luton, Royal Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Dorset, Buckinghamshire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Suffolk and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Services

Key - Performance		DoT - Direction of travel ie better or worse than the previous month.
Green	Performance is on target, no action required.	 Performance has got worse.
Amber	Performance is slightly off-track.	 Performance has improved.
Red	Performance is worse than the target, action required.	 Performance has stayed the same.
↑	Value on a surveillance measure has shown an increase - this does not automatically indicate worsening or improving performance.	
↓	Value on a surveillance measure has shown a decrease - this does not automatically indicate worsening or improving performance.	
Surv.	<p>Surveillance measures are indicators that we do not set a target for because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The indicator tells us about the context for our services, but does not measure our performance - for example the carbon dioxide emissions from our property. • Where performance is not entirely within our control - for example the rate of deaths from accidental dwelling fires. <p>We continue to report these because they have a significant impact on demand for services or outcomes for Norfolk people and are important to note.</p>	
n/a	Not applicable.	
Reporting period	Most recently available data used. For most indicators Direction of Travel compares to last period, or same time last year. Unless suffixed by either a [Q] or [A] (representing Quarterly or Annually respectively) each measure is monitored monthly.	

Automatic Fire Alarms Reduction - 2014/15

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

Summary

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) represent a significant percentage of emergency calls attended by the Service, although 95% thankfully turn out to be false alarms. In 2012, Panel was consulted on arrangements to reduced attendance to AFAs by requiring certain premises designated “in scope” to confirm the existence of a fire prior to an emergency response. Following approval by Cabinet, the first phase of these arrangements was implemented in June 2013 requiring confirmation of a fire between 7am and 7pm before any automatic mobilisation of resources. This step has achieved an estimated reduction of 450 emergency response call attendances for the year, with a £22k financial saving. In line with previous experience, in the first seven months of the year only one call initiated by an AFA notification required any significant deployment of firefighting equipment. In addition, the Service has seen further success in reducing AFAs through call challenge, the actions taken by the Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisations (FAMOs) and by suspending automatic attendance to four premises with excessive false alarms. The Service is now proposing implementation of phase 2 of the arrangements approved by Cabinet. This will extend the requirement on ‘in scope’ premises to make a call confirming a fire at any time of day or night, seven days a week. The Service also proposes to review ‘in scope’ premises in 2014/15 to examine the potential for further application of a wider range of premises. A report to Members on this will be developed further in due course.

Action Required:

In the light of experience in 2013/14, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the proposed implementation of phase 2 of the AFA Reduction arrangements as approved by Cabinet.

1. Background

- 1.1 In November 2012, the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a report highlighting that emergency response to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) represented 28% of total calls attended. 95% of these calls were thankfully false alarms with significant numbers caused by faulty or poorly designed and maintained systems.
- 1.2 AFA systems are designed to alert people to the potential presence of a fire but not designed for the automatic response of the Fire and Rescue Service. The legal duty to ensure the safety of occupants from fire and to coordinate the evacuation of a business premises rests with the ‘Responsible Person’ not the Fire and Rescue Service. The duty to ensure the safe evacuation of ‘Relevant Persons’ is a legal duty on the ‘Responsible Person’ under the auspices of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, for which NFRS is the enforcing authority.

- 1.3 In Norfolk there are thousands of AFA systems fitted in a wide range of buildings. In some cases Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisations (FAMOs) have a contractual arrangement with individual premises to respond to an activation of the fire alarm at their premises by notifying the registered key holder (when the building is unstaffed). They also contact NFRS Fire Control, informing the Fire and Rescue Service that the fire alarm has operated at their client's address. There is no confirmation period to ascertain if the fire alarm signal received by NFRS is a fire or a false alarm.
- 1.4 Following the introduction of call challenge arrangements in 2011, the Service recommended a further proportionate and incremental approach to AFA mobilising; following similar policies in other UK Fire and Rescue Services. This would release wider efficiency gains enabling improved fire appliance availability for real emergencies, allow more time to be spent on preventative engagement and release further financial savings. It would also significantly reduce disruption and loss of productivity to the local economy.
- 1.5 It is the view of NFRS that the risk of not being able to attend real emergencies is much greater than the risk of attending an AFA activation that is very likely to be a false alarm. The remaining 5% of calls to AFAs where a problem was identified have been shown to rarely result in the need for Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) intervention and of those where intervention is required, the FRS very rarely requires fire fighting tactics to be deployed. However, the Service acknowledges fires may still occur under these proposals and the severity of impact cannot be determined.
- 1.6 In summary, the business case for attending fewer AFA calls is based on:
- Limiting the burden on businesses through unnecessary evacuations or stoppages of work.
 - Releasing additional productivity on wholetime stations - applying this proposal in full could realise 250 hours of fire appliance time per annum to be used for other tasks including safety critical training, risk site inspections and prevention work including home fire risk checks.
 - Increase the capacity of front line resources to deal with real emergencies and the availability of the nearest resources to attend.
 - Reduce unnecessary blue light runs to over 500 calls per annum.
 - Reduce the environmental impact of unnecessary journeys.
 - Realise savings from reduced activity - it is estimated that this proposal would realise over £30k in cashable savings in total.
- 1.7 The Service proposed the adoption of a categorisation of premises which recognised the concern for those more vulnerable to fire where immediate mobilisation would continue. Those premises 'in scope' are required to provide a confirmation of a fire following the activation of an AFA system from the premises. Whilst the possibility of a fire occurring cannot be eradicated, NFRS highlights that the likelihood of a fire requiring fire fighting intervention is extremely low following an AFA activation.
- 1.8 Having considered feedback from a targeted consultation process, the Panel resolved to recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the proposal to manage emergency attendance to AFAs.

1.9 At the meeting on 7 January 2013, Cabinet resolved that:

1. 'In scope' premises be required to provide a confirmation 999 call from their premises following an automatic fire alarm call before a fire appliance is automatically mobilised, with effect from June 2013.
2. 'In scope' premises be required to provide a confirmation call of fire at the premises following activation of an automatic fire alarm between the hours of 0700hrs to 1900hrs Monday to Friday during year one. For periods outside these times Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service would respond automatically on receipt of an automatic fire alarm call.
3. A call confirming a fire would be required at any time of day or night, seven days a week in year two, effective from June 2014.
4. Where three or more false alarms from the premises were received within five days, confirmation of a fire would be required before attending. This would apply to any category of premises regardless of whether 'in' or 'out of scope' of the core attendance proposal.
5. The change made at resolution four be extended to those sites which had recorded five or more false alarms in any 13 week rolling period. This condition would be at the discretion of senior managers of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, depending on the relative life risk at the premises.
6. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service would only resume full emergency response to reports of automatic fire alarm calls activating once in receipt of evidence from a competent fire alarm engineer that the fire alarm was functioning correctly, in relation to resolutions four and five.
7. Specific heritage risks be included within the 'out of scope' category evenings, night times and at weekends, which would provide for immediate attendance on receipt of an automatic fire alarm notification at those times.
8. The provision of a 'referred premises' list be created, which would enable the Service to exercise discretion to grant an exemption to an 'in scope' premises where it represented a special risk or was a key part of the county's infrastructure. This would operate in a similar way to the provision for heritage sites.

1.10 For absolute clarity, when an AFA call is made from an "in scope" premises, NFRS will not automatically send emergency resources. If there is a subsequent confirmation of a fire, the Service will send the predetermined resources to the premises.

1.11 The first phase of these arrangements was introduced in June 2013 and the Service now proposes to fully implement the arrangement agreed by Cabinet, following a review of progress by the Panel.

2. AFA Reduction 2013/14 – Phase 1

2.1 Since introduction of the year one policy in June 2013, NFRS has achieved a 22% reduction in the number of unwanted AFA calls attended compared to the same period in the previous service year. Overall, it is projected that the Service will see a reduction of approximately 450 AFA calls across the whole year and a financial saving in the region of £22k. As approximately two thirds of these calls originate in urban areas, this has also had a beneficial impact on the availability of those resources for genuine emergencies and productivity improvements for other activities.

2.2 During year one, NFRS has noted a significant improvement in the number of AFA calls that have been challenged by Fire Control. NFRS defines these calls as 'AFA

not attended' and they represent occasions when a fire call is received from an AFA system either from premises or a FAMO representing premises within the 'In Scope' category. In these circumstances NFRS has requested the caller to confirm the presence of fire and to re contact NFRS via the 999 system if a fire or perception of fire is present. This approach is now embedded within our fire control and has seen a four fold improvement in the number of calls we have filtered.

Some FAMOs have also been improving their call filtering procedures and we believe this is also a significant contribution to the reduction in the number of calls we have been receiving where AFA systems are involved.

- 2.3 During year one, NFRS has also suspended automatic attendance to four premises due to excessive numbers of unwanted fire alarm signals. The suspension criteria apply to any premises with the exception of domestic properties, sheltered housing and hospitals. The Panel is asked to note that the three main hospitals in the county remain the largest cause of false alarms when compared to other premises types in Norfolk. NFRS has taken the view that applying automatic attendance suspension would not be appropriate for hospitals due to the large numbers of vulnerable people requiring high levels of care, although it should be recognised that the design and fire precaution requirements for hospitals are very high. The Service would look to continually engage with the NHS to reduce fire alarm calls in addition to reducing the numbers of fire appliances we would normally dispatch on receipt of AFA calls.

3. AFA Reduction 2014/15 – Phase 2

- 3.1 Based on an assessment of the impact of the AFA reduction arrangements introduced in June 2013, the next step would be to fully implement the arrangements approved by Cabinet. This will mean that all 'in scope' premises will be required to provide confirmation of fire at any time of day, or day of the week. The Panel are invited to comment on this step prior to implementation.
- 3.2 Against the backdrop of the number of unwanted AFA signals NFRS still receives, the strength of the business case for reduced attendance and the high likelihood of the alarm being a false alarm caused by either faulty or incorrectly installed fire alarms, the Service supports the removal of the time of day and day of the week criteria for 'in scope' premises. This step will enable NFRS to further improve unwanted AFA signal reduction and release further efficiency savings of the order of £10k.
- 3.3 The Service remains of the view that the risk of not being able to attend real emergencies is greater than the risk of attending an AFA activation that is very likely to be a false alarm. The Service will always respond to any report of fire. However, it acknowledges that fires may still occur under these proposals which receive a delayed response, and the severity of impact cannot be determined.
- 3.4 In proposing this approach, it should be remembered that in many cases, premises with AFA systems do not have a link from their system to a FAMO. In such cases there is a reliance on the premises being occupied to enable a 999 call to NFRS. This arrangement does not tend to cause high levels of unwanted AFA signals to NFRS Control, as our call challenge process can quickly ascertain from the caller the need for an emergency response. In the case of premises linked to FAMOs, the contractual obligation lies between the premises and the FAMO and not NFRS. This typically requires the FAMO to contact a nominated premises key holder of any AFA activation

and to notify the local fire and rescue service that a fire alarm is operating at the premises concerned.

- 3.5 NFRS recognises the value of Norfolk's heritage and in doing so would seek to maintain an emergency response to any 'in scope' premises with a Listed Status of grade one between the hours of 1900 to 0700hrs following receipt of an AFA activation reported at the premises.
- 3.6 Whilst the original intention was to implement this second phase with effect from June 2014, it is proposed that timescales be left to the discretion of the Service to facilitate communication with affected stakeholders and implementation of the necessary call handling arrangements.

4. AFA Reduction – Future Developments

- 4.1 NFRS proposes to review the 'Out of Scope' category during 2014/15 with a view to assessing whether further premises types could be included 'in scope' of these call management arrangements. Any such move would be based on a robust risk assessment of potential impact and will be subject to a further report to Members prior to implementation.
- 4.2 The current 'Out of Scope' category includes:
- Any domestic premises fire alarm.
 - Hospitals.
 - Residential Care Homes for the vulnerable and elderly.
 - Hotels.
 - Sheltered Housing.
 - Houses in multiple occupation - including bedsits.
 - Residential flats - including high rise.
 - House, converted into flats. 2/3/4 floors.
 - Boarding schools.
 - The parts of colleges or universities used for sleeping accommodation.
 - COMAH sites (Control of Major Accident Hazard).
 - Any other sleeping risk - including penal establishments and prisons.
 - Any school - nursery, primary, junior or high school.
- 4.3 There may be scope to consider some of these categories for a response option that requires confirmation of a fire at certain times of day. This would include those premises where occupants are supported by higher levels of supervisory staff and where the Regulatory compliance requirement for safety is particularly high.

5. Finance

- 5.1 We estimate that the introduction of phase 2 of these proposals will achieve an additional financial saving of £10k. This would result in a total saving in the order of over £30,000 for full implementation.

6. Legal

- 6.1 An AFA is a system devised to provide the occupants with an early warning of fire and thereby saving lives through early detection. The management of the system itself and the safe evacuation from the property is the duty of the Responsible Person and this is their legal obligation under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 6.2 NFRS's statutory duty is to provide a means of receiving reports of fire and not necessarily to respond to calls. The duty therefore to deal with AFA systems rests clearly with the occupiers of premises and not the Fire and Rescue Service.

7. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 7.1 A full EqIA was conducted in January 2012. Our proposals do not impact on protected characteristics as our categorisation of 'in scope' and 'out of scope' premises retains our current AFA response to premises occupied by those potentially more vulnerable to fire eg older people or those with mobility difficulties.

8. Environmental Implications

- 8.1 Implementation of phase 2 AFA reduction will have some impact on the fuel and running costs of our fire and rescue appliances. The fuel used during blue light response is greater than when driving at normal road speeds. By reducing the number of AFAs we attend we will reduce fuel costs, wear and tear and our carbon footprint.
- 8.2 Similarly, we would predict a reduction in the impact on other road users and noise pollution from the use of two tones would also be reduced with the reduction in blue light journeys.

9. Any Other implications

9.1 Emergency Response Standards (ERS)

The Fire Authority has established a number of standards for operational response by NFRS including a 10 minute response time for the first pump attending a 'Fire – Life Risk' call on 80% of occasions. Currently AFA calls are included within the categories of calls which are measured for this element of the ERS and current performance against the ERS is reported at 78.7%. Attending less AFAs will be having an impact on Service performance against our ERS. This is because two thirds of AFAs occur in urban areas covered by wholetime appliances and are associated with a rapid response. There is therefore a statistically higher impact on removing these calls from the calculation of our ERS performance. When fully implemented, these arrangements are estimated to have an approximate 0.8% adverse impact on the percentage of ERS achievement. Given the proportion of AFA calls that are false alarms, there is an argument to exclude these from the measurement of NFRS performance on attending 'Fire – Life Risk' and include against that measure only those incidents where a life could have potentially been at risk. However, because of the statistical impact described above, the impact of such a change on ERS

performance has been assessed from average figures from previous years as being approximately minus 2%.

- 9.2 Officers have considered all the implications which Members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account

10. Section 17 - Crime and Disorder Act

- 10.1 There are no direct implications of this report for the S17 Crime and Disorder Act.

11. Action Required

- 11.1 In the light of experience in 2013/14, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel are invited to comment on the proposed implementation of phase 2 of the AFA Reduction arrangements as approved by Cabinet.

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet 'Response to Automatic Fire Alarms' January 2013.

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**5 December 2013 East Coast Flood Response
by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service**

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

Summary

The tidal storm surge that affected the east coast on the 5/6 December 2013 was the first occasion on which new flood rescue resources funded by Norfolk County Council were deployed to a local major incident. Since the last tidal surge in 2007, grant funding from NCC and DEFRA, totalling more than £600,000, has increased the flood rescue capability of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) from zero to 17 specialist teams. All were used in December. Mutual aid reinforcements were brought in from other Services to support our own teams but only 15 were required compared to the 40 requested in 2007, when Norfolk had none of its own. All available national mutual aid resources were used in December, so had Norfolk wanted the 40 it asked for in 2007, it would not have got them.

Norfolk's multi-agency management of the December flood was described afterwards by the Chair of the National Resilience Board as 'exemplary' and a model of best practice for other Local Resilience Forums to follow.

NFRS chaired the first two Strategic Coordinating Groups for the December flood and led the rescue phase of the incident. The Service also provided expert advice to national coordinators on the wider management of the Government response to the surge. The national debriefing process was subsequently carried out using Norfolk's reporting templates and was assisted by Norfolk Officers, many of whom have subsequently gone on to provide support to colleagues in the south west and south east during their own flooding in January and February.

The direction and funding provided by NCC has brought flood response in Norfolk from zero to national best practice in the last five years. However, with the exception of a small revenue uplift (£34,000), all funding has been provided on a one-off capital grant basis. The bulk of funding will expire in 2017 and the current revenue allocation will be in no way sufficient to maintain the capability.

There is no Government direction on the role of the Fire and Rescue Service in flooding and the choice of whether and how we deal with flooding is entirely in the gift of the County Council as the designated Fire and Rescue Authority.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to note the contents of this report. Members should also note that at some time before 2017 the Fire Authority will have to consider its intentions with regard to flood response and the provision made by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service going forward.

1. Background

- 1.1 Between 5/7 December 2013 the United Kingdom experienced weather conditions not seen in some areas of the UK since 1953, when a large loss of life and widespread flooding occurred along the east coast. In 2007, a "near" inundation occurred at Great Yarmouth however the weather changed and the risk was averted.

- 1.2 On 5 December 2013, a period of high winds preceded a pattern of low pressure depression and high onshore winds and extraordinarily high spring tides.
- 1.3 North Sea inundation, due to exceptionally high tides, occurred across vast swathes of the UK shore line, more particularly along its eastern coast.
- 1.4 Locally, for Norfolk, its assessment of community risk places flooding and coastal inundation amongst the highest risk to our county. Accordingly the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) has undertaken extensive planning and response organisations, including NFRS, have planned, equipped and trained themselves for such an eventuality.
- 1.5 The County Council and DEFRA have invested over £600k in NFRS capability to plan for, manage and respond to flooding and water related incidents.
- 1.6 This investment has positioned NFRS as a leading service in the UK for its capability to respond to flooding. The funding for this capability extends up until the end of the financial year 2016/17. Thereafter further financial support will be required to maintain this service.
- 1.7 NFRS now has four specialist swift water rescue teams, a dive unit and 12 flood first responder teams. These not only provide reassurance for Norfolk residents on our capability to protect them but parts of this capability are also declared on the National Resilience Register to be called upon, when needed, to support other Fire and Rescue Services in their response to flooding. This has been recently tested successfully with deployments in January and February to the extensive flooding in the south and south west of England.
- 1.8 The development of NFRS's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) has foreseen the risk of flooding and includes plans to maintain a capability to manage flood response resources. Our next IRMP 2014/17 continues with this assessment and provision. Beyond 2017, the Fire Authority will need to determine to what extent funding for this can be provided.

2. The Event

- 2.1 Nationally agencies were given at least three days notice to prepare for possible flooding, supported by sophisticated Met Office and Environment Agency (EA) modelling software.
- 2.2 Preplanning in NFRS commenced on 3 December. On 4 December senior operational fire and rescue commanders hosted a multi-agency planning cell, which met to run through the flood response plans should the flood warnings become more severe, so that the Service, from a command control perspective, was brought to full readiness.

The planning cell undertook a full assessment of the assets and capabilities it would be likely to require in the event of a 1953 flood event beyond those capabilities it held within the County. This preliminary assessment was passed to the Fire and Rescue Services National Coordination team to prepare national teams for movement should they be called up. The assessment took full account that other Fire and Rescue Services would also be likely to call upon these assets so determined how this would

be impacted on any request from NFRS to enable other counties to summon additional resources at the same time.

- 2.3 Simultaneous to planning for the tidal surge, the 'business as usual' of emergency incidents dealt the Service with the challenge of managing a fire in the hold of a cargo vessel in King's Lynn port, a severe fire in a scrap yard and a fatal road traffic collision.
- 2.4 On 4 December a Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) was convened at Police HQ at 16:00 hours, chaired by the Chief Fire Officer. The available EA guidance outlined the threat of flooding to be less than the 1953 event and more closely matched to the 2007 events.
- 2.5 At 21:00 hours a second SCG was convened, again chaired by NFRS, by which time forecast information had changed significantly with the EA threat assessment suggesting conditions at or possible worse than 1953 levels.
- 2.6 As a result, three Tactical Coordination Groups (TCGs) were convened to work throughout the night to adjust their plans for a more severe event and plan for resources to be positioned during the daylight hours early on 5 December. The key strategic intent of the SCG was to warn the public and conduct an orderly evacuation, of more than 9,500 threatened homes, before high tide at 2100-2200 hours on the 5 December. NFRS was tasked with coordinating the rescue phase of the incident, from the onset of flooding to the declaration of transition to the recovery phase.

The TCGs worked alongside Forward Operating Bases (FOB) at King's Lynn, North Walsham and Great Yarmouth. Resources were mobilised to the FOBs ahead of the high tide times, on the principal that transport routes would be blocked once flooding began.

All NFRS operations were directly controlled from an operations cell at Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters in Hethersett.

- 2.7 Having already assessed the possible additional resources that would be required to manage flooding on the scale of the 1953 event, NFRS requested that National Resilience Assets be called upon to provide further capability in the form of additional:
 - Swift water rescue teams.
 - High volume pumps.
 - Tactical advisors.
 - Enhanced Logistic Support Teams.

Voluntary groups from Norfolk Lowland Search and Rescue (NORLSAR) and Norfolk 4X4s were also used.

- 2.8 Military assistance: NFRS has been providing expert advice to local and national military commanders for several years on potential roles for military assistance to the civil community in the event of flooding. In line with this preparatory work, all Army Officers attending the SCG had previously met and worked with their NFRS colleagues and we were therefore able to successfully identify appropriate tasks for their personnel, working within a safety cordon provided by firefighters. 60 Light Dragoons attended Gorleston fire and rescue station, where they were instructed in the use of temporary flood barriers (provided free of charge by UK Power Networks), before deploying to the Great Yarmouth telephone exchange, where they worked with firefighters to erect the defences.

2.9 Before, during and after high water, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service undertook the following tasks on behalf of the multi-agency Strategic Coordination Group:

- Reconnaissance using 4WD fire engines.
- Infrastructure protection.
- Evacuation.
- Rescue.
- Safety management of all responding agencies.
- Pumping of flood water.
- Command and logistics support.

In addition, Norfolk Officers provided support and guidance to the national coordination of flood response assets.

2.10 The response phase of the operation was closed down following a Strategic Co-ordination Group meeting mid morning on the 6 December.

3. Resource Implications

3.1 **Finance:** This event required significant resource deployment, including external support from other agencies and NFRS.

3.2 **Staff:** All available Officers were committed to this event and to support business as usual. Any extended duration would have seen NFRS Officers requiring relief from other Fire and Rescue Services. A plan for Officer support had been produced that was ready for implementation should it have been necessary.

Support from non uniformed staff at very short notice was excellent with all departments working a shift system throughout the night.

Integration of external service staff with NFRS went very well.

3.3 **Property:** Some fire and rescue stations were in the flood risk and the business continuity plan was triggered at Wells Fire Station. Fortunately, the station was not affected on this occasion.

3.4 **IT:** Whilst ICT systems were used to good effect at Headquarters, there were some difficulties with download speeds at stations in North Norfolk, limiting communication links to the TCG and FOB in North Walsham.

4. Section 17 - Crime and Disorder Act

4.1 There are no direct implications.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

5.2 Members should also note that at some time before 2017 the Fire Authority will have to consider its intentions with regard to flood response and the provision made by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service going forward.

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Collaborative Opportunities

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

Summary

The report sets out the basis and scope for collaborative and joint working initiatives involving Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS). It recognises that such working can be to the benefit of the people of Norfolk and may provide opportunities to achieve service improvement, efficiencies and savings. However, NFRS is currently recognised as a cost effective, lean and efficient organisation and this may restrict some of the benefits that could be delivered. The report sets out some of the current arrangements for joint working with some notable examples and identifies some new areas of joint working to be explored.

Action Required:

Members are asked to consider and comment on the opportunities for collaborative working contained in the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Panel, Members received an update from the Cabinet Member on some of the key collaborative and joint working initiatives involving Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS). In follow up to that, this report sets out the basis and scope for such initiatives and identifies opportunities for future developments in such ways of working.
- 1.2 Members will also receive a report today on the outcomes of the Fire and Rescue Peer Assessment. As part of their feedback, the Peer Assessment Team recognised that the Service was already engaged in a range of collaborative and joint working arrangements across Service activities and that a number of future opportunities were under consideration. In summary, the Team commented that 'opportunities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness through collaboration should continue to be explored and taken forward to a conclusion'.

2. Collaborative and Joint Working

2.1 The Case for Collaboration and Joint Working

With funding reductions potentially continuing to 2020, there remains a considerable challenge for public services to manage reductions in revenue budgets and to continue delivering key services. There is a reasonable expectation that all public services will examine every opportunity to improve effectiveness and efficiency, looking to work jointly with others where this can make a positive contribution to the outcomes for the people of Norfolk.

Within this, the potential benefits of collaboration should be to:

- Reduce costs overall.
- Improve organisational capacity.
- Secure cashable efficiencies.
- Increase operational resilience.
- Enhance organisational performance.
- Deliver efficiency improvements and reduce duplication of effort.

2.2 **Models of Collaboration**

2.2.1 Mergers with other Services

Mergers offer the most fundamental change resulting in the creation of a new entity outside the control of the County Council. The Fire and Rescue statutory framework enables the Fire Authority to approach others with a view to setting up a merged larger service if there are financial or other advantages. Whilst there are no insurmountable barriers to such mergers, recent experience has been that the financial set up costs have halted such moves, particularly where low cost Fire and Rescue Services are involved (eg East and West Sussex, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire). Any merger would require Parliamentary time for regulatory approval and is likely to take around two years to deliver.

2.2.2 Strategic Collaboration under a 'lead authority' model

Offering opportunities to achieve economies of scale and avoid duplication of effort, whilst agreeing to one of the partners having a lead role in delivery. Such a model may require ceding of legal responsibilities and will require cost apportionment agreements.

2.2.3 Collaboration through Partnership Governance

Joint delivery of activities or projects through shared and equal ownership and with jointly owned responsibility for outcomes. Governance structures would potentially be determined by the scale and cost activity but would require an agreed level of delegation for relevant decisions to a delivery group and agreements for resourcing and funding.

2.2.4 Joint working

More informal joint working arrangements individuals or teams from one or more organisations to deliver an initiative or activity to mutually agreed benefit and outcomes.

2.2.5 Shared or Provision of Services

Drawing professional, technical or transactional support from another origination which may operate under a range of governance structures and charging mechanisms. Usually intended to provide savings or efficiencies through economies of scale or as a cost effective model to deliver specialist professional or technical support.

2.3 Collaborative Opportunities for Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

- 2.3.1 There are a number of natural collaborative partners for NFRS. As a service of Norfolk County Council, the largest and most natural partner is the County Council itself and in Norfolk this is reflected in many pre existing working arrangements.
- 2.3.2 As an emergency service however, there are also significant benefits to look for joint working opportunities with other Fire and Rescue Services. Fire and Rescue partners provide opportunities around collaborative across common areas of activity to achieve improvements in efficiency, capacity and resilience.
- 2.3.3 There is an increasing focus on 'blue light' interoperability and general working, especially around efficiency across similar areas of work, activity or resource management. Recent developments have focused on joined up working at the scene of incidents but there are wider opportunities for the Fire and Rescue to support the work in particular of Ambulance Service colleagues or to look to share resources such as premises.

2.4 Determining Collaborative Priorities

- 2.4.1 NFRS has limited capacity to undertake extensive work in examining a wide range of collaborative opportunities. As a lean Service, it is essential for the impact of this work to be prioritised and managed to ensure that beneficial opportunities are pursued and the expectations of partners clarified and met. To judge which opportunities should be progressed, it will be important to apply a consistent set of criteria for that purpose. These should include:
- Can the collaboration be delivered within legal frameworks?
 - Will the collaboration be in the interests of the people of Norfolk – delivering better or more effective services?
 - Will the collaboration result in significant cashable savings or operational efficiencies?
- 2.4.2 Any collaborative initiative will need to recognise that NFRS is already an extremely cost effective and efficient organisation. The Service has a good understanding of its relative costs benchmarked with other Fire and Rescue Services through CIPFA and other nationally collected statistics. It also reflects the profile of the most efficient Fire and Rescue Services reinforced recently in Sir Ken Knight's review of efficiencies and operations in English Fire and Rescue Authorities 'Facing the Future' and subsequently in our Peer Assessment. Whilst this does not rule out any scope for efficiencies, inevitably this means any financial or efficiency returns are likely to be more limited than may be the case in some other organisations.
- 2.4.3 Our services are delivered principally through employed staff and staffing costs constitute over 70% of budget spend. However, the majority of those costs are dedicated to delivering frontline services as the following identifies:
- 87% of all NFRS staff (establishment of 967) have an emergency response role; 5.5% deliver other front line services (including 999 call handling).
 - 8.7% provide service support (including risk critical training, appliance maintenance and repair, fire intelligence, HR, ICT, critical equipment maintenance and supply, technical and administrative support).

- The Service carries a ratio of less than one support staff to every 10 service delivery employees.

2.4.4 NFRS currently operates from 42 sites across the County. Currently several of these sites share accommodation with other partners, including emergency services, but this remains a potential area for further development.

3. Current Collaborative Initiatives

- 3.1 There are diverse examples of existing joint working involving NFRS with a range of partners. Some of these are very significant areas of work which will impact on the Service in the years to come and will need to be factored into any new collaborative ventures.
- 3.2 In terms of Fire/Fire collaboration, the Service has had a long history of working in partnership through local, regional and national structures to support mutual aid and resilience arrangements. This has been most significantly demonstrated recently through the response to flooding incidents both in Norfolk and other parts of the country. Through national work encompassing operational policy, guidance and resilience co-ordinated through the Chief Fire Officer's Association, the Service is currently committed to a national partnership to collaborate on the development and maintenance of Standard Operational Procedures. These will in turn inform operational practice, procedures and the development and maintenance of the skills of firefighting staff within Norfolk.
- 3.3 The most significant Fire/Fire collaboration currently underway is the refresh of our control room mobilising systems with colleagues on the East Coast (Lincolnshire and Humberside) and Hertfordshire, based on a £7.2M DCLG grant. Next year, this project will deliver a single updated mobilising system with shared infrastructure. Moving beyond 2015, the four services will benefit from an arrangement to provide resilience around our emergency call handling that offers opportunities for further efficiencies and joint working across related functions.
- 3.4 In terms of Fire/Emergency Services, through the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP), NFRS is involved in joint working across the blue light services through a nationally co-ordinated programme looking to deliver continuous improvements in how police, fire and ambulance services train and exercise together to save more lives. The strategic aims of the programme are:
- To establish joint interoperability principles and ways of working (joint doctrine).
 - To develop greater understanding of roles, responsibilities and capabilities amongst tri service responders.
 - To improve communication, information sharing and mobilisation procedures between Services including their control rooms.
 - To implement a training strategy for all levels of command.
 - To implement a joint testing and exercising strategy for all levels of command to ensure lessons identified progress into learning and procedural change.
- 3.5 Separately but in a similar vein, the Service is working through a national and regional structure that will deliver a new emergency services communication network after 2016. This aims to ensure emergency services have effective communications systems available to them in responding to and resolving emergency incidents.

3.6 Outside of the operational arena, as would be expected as a service department, Norfolk County Council is the most significant partner for NFRS. Examples of this would include:

- The provision of transactional services including payroll, finance and pensions.
- Professional and technical support from shared services including:
 - Communications and media.
 - Finance.
 - Planning and Performance.
 - Property Services (through NPS).
- Specialist professional support and guidance, for example for procurement, legal, ICT and HR.

Increasingly NFRS is looking to offer services to other NCC services. This already includes fleet maintenance services which we are hoping to develop further and new areas of activity, for example highway clearance for fallen trees.

NFRS also works with NCC partners to achieve positive outcomes in terms of fire safety (working with Community Services on the safety of vulnerable people in their homes and on the regulation of fire safety within care homes) and road safety (as a partner within the road casualty reduction partnership).

4. Exploring future opportunities

4.1 As Members will know, Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council have signed a formal agreement to pursue opportunities for joint working where this is in the best interests of the people we serve. This agreement builds on the extensive examples of collaboration already underway between the two organisations and aims to accelerate this collaboration, seeking to expand existing opportunities and exploring new areas for join-up. In terms of the Fire and Rescue Service, this provides an opportunity to explore a range of opportunities to work more closely with Suffolk Fire and Rescue.

4.2 The Service is currently pursuing opportunities to evaluate joint working with the Norfolk Constabulary. Both services have identified some common areas of work which could be worthy of further investigation:

- Command and Control.
- Emergency Planning and Events.
- Information/Intelligence Teams.
- Community Risk Reduction Team (Fire/Crime Safety Advice etc).
- Joint Training.
- Logistics.
- Single estate and co location of staff.

Both NFRS and Norfolk Constabulary are looking for opportunities to evaluate the potential benefits to both organisations in these areas to facilitate subsequent collaboration.

5. Other Implications

5.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This report is not making proposals that will have a direct impact on equality of access or outcomes for diverse and/or protected groups.

Officers have considered all the implications which Members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

6. Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

6.1 There are no direct implications of this report relating to the Crime and Disorder Act.

7. Action Required

7.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the opportunities for collaborative working contained in the report.

Background Papers

None.

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Outcome of LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge - 28 to 31 January 2014

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

Executive Summary

The Local Government Association (LGA) and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) conducted a Peer Challenge of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in January 2014. This involved a four day site visit by the assessment team and a comprehensive review of both operational and organisational aspects of NFRS and the Fire and Rescue Authority.

The outcome of the Peer Challenge was positive and a large number of examples of good practice were identified. A number of areas where it was suggested a renewed focus may be worthwhile considering were also identified. Both the strengths and the areas to focus on have been summarised in the attached report by the LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge team.

Action Required

Members are asked to consider and comment on the findings of the LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge.

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the 2010 General Election, the regime of central Government led inspections was reviewed and many ended. This included those for Fire and Rescue Services. In its place, the LGA and CFOA worked together to create a peer challenge framework that Fire and Rescue Services could opt-into, as part of the sector's self-regulation or sector-led improvement.
- 1.2 At the invitation of NFRS, a team from the LGA and CFOA conducted an on-site four day Peer Challenge, from 28 to 31 January 2014. The assessment followed lines of enquiry identified through the self-assessment process. The Peer Challenge Team consisted of:
 - Mick Green, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service.
 - Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Gloucestershire County Council and the Liberal Democrat Lead on the Fire and Rescue Service.
 - Darren Dovey, Area Manager, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service.
 - Denis O'Driscoll, Area Manager, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.
 - Chris Bowron, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association.

2. Scope

2.1 The LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge combined a comprehensive assessment of the operational effectiveness of Fire and Rescue Services with a parallel corporate assessment of the Fire Authority. Specifically:

- Community risk management (including information management).
- Prevention.
- Protection.
- Response.
- Health and safety and welfare.
- Training and development.
- Call management and incident support.
- Leadership.
- Corporate capacity.

3. Findings

3.1 The final report that details the findings of the Peer Challenge is at Appendix 1. What follows is a summary of some of the key issues.

Leadership and governance

3.2 Strengths

The management team has a good grip of the issues facing the Service, in particular the financial challenges, and works closely with both the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and the Members of the Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is well informed and able to challenge the strategic direction and operational performance of NFRS.

3.3 Areas to focus on

The move from overview and scrutiny to a committee system may pose a challenge for the management team, as they seek political support for future changes to the way in which the fire and rescue service is delivered in the county. Linked to this, there is an opportunity to develop a longer term strategic vision for the Service that shapes what it will look like in 2020. This may include the realisation of further collaborative working with emergency services in the county and region.

Outcomes

3.4 Strengths

NFRS performs well, when compared to other Fire and Rescue Services in its family group, has handled a number of major incidents well and is highly valued by both communities of Norfolk and partners. The investment in equipment, technology and training has helped improve efficiency and safety and enabled the Fire and Rescue Service to respond quickly and effectively to recent major incidences.

3.5 Areas to focus on

Whilst the Service continues to work with a range of partners and community groups to reduce risk and protect vulnerable people from harm, there is the potential to develop this further through initiatives like 'co-responding' with the East of England Ambulance Service.

Organisational capacity

3.6 Strengths

Staff are well trained, highly motivated and committed to delivering an effective service, from within limited resources. Additional, external funding that has been drawn down from both central Government and the European Union has enabled areas of expertise to be developed.

3.7 Areas to focus on

The Service has a structured approach to programme and project management. There are a large number of projects underway, which can lead to a dispersal of limited (back office) resources over a broad range of initiatives. There is an opportunity to look again at the projects, re-prioritise and focus in on the areas of greatest importance to the Service. There may be a need to consider how middle management can be more involved in strategy, policy and programme development and delivery. In this way, management capacity can be built and personnel developed for future roles as senior managers within the Service.

Community Risk Management

3.8 Strengths

The Fire Intelligence Unit provides a wealth of information that helps develop accurate assessments of community risk. It also enables key performance management information to be analysed and used by both the senior management team and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to identify and respond to areas of poor performance.

3.9 Areas to focus on

There is an opportunity to involve a broader range of people from NFRS, partner agencies and the community in strategic planning.

Information management

3.10 Strengths

The Service uses a range of systems to gather, collate and analyse information for the identification and management of risks and for performance management. In particular, the 'LiveView' system has helped to embed a performance management culture within all levels of the Service.

3.11 Areas to focus on

The Information Management Team recognises that there is a need to rationalise systems and develop an information management strategy. Also, there is a need to look to developments in the County Council's approach to information management and the opportunities that this may open up.

Prevention

3.12 Strengths

The Service has a clear set of Prevention priorities that are articulated in the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014/17 and clearly understood by staff. There is a collaborative approach to prevention across the Service and good examples of joint work with adult social care and mental health.

3.13 Areas to focus on

There may be an opportunity to better utilise Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel to gather intelligence, profile communities and deliver services to the vulnerable, particularly in rural communities.

Protection

3.14 Strengths

A collaborative approach is taken to regulatory work and there is a good balance between enforcement and assistance. Key risk information is shared with partners and within the Service and innovative use is made of limited resources. The risk based approach to responding to automatic fire alarms that has been developed has released resources to other priorities.

3.15 Areas to focus on

The draft Protection Strategy would benefit from an action plan that specifies how it will be delivered over 2014/17. This will be delivered through the Service Plan and Protection Function Plans.

Response

3.16 Strengths

The Service has a good grip on operational procedures and benefits from investment in integrated technology, high quality appliances and equipment and training skilled staff. The Service is resilient, being able to respond to major incidences and maintain capability during a period of industrial action.

3.17 Areas to focus on

There is the opportunity for the Operational Improvement Programme to lead to the development of a longer-term Response vision and strategy.

Health and safety

3.18 Strengths

There is clear strategic leadership and ownership of Health and Safety and learning from incidents of national interest, such as Shirley Towers, is applied locally.

3.19 Areas to focus on

There is an opportunity to review existing arrangements for medicals and fitness testing, embed welfare into Health and Safety and complete the implementation of the recommendations of the Mott McDonald Health and Safety audit.

Training and Development

3.20 Strengths

There is clear strategic direction and leadership for training in the Service, which has been informed by a comprehensive training needs analysis that reflects local risks. Efforts have been made to find new ways of delivering training over a large geographical area and make it available to RDS firefighters.

3.21 Areas to focus on

The emphasis on training and development provision is upon operational staff. However, the Service needs to ensure that this is suitably balanced with broader staff development, including that of support staff and managers. There is a recognised need to establish a site for (hot) fire behaviour training, something that has proved difficult to progress to date.

Call management and incident support

3.22 Strengths

The investment that has been made in Control staff and functions has improved performance, generated a positive national reputation and lead to collaboration through the East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium. There are proven

effective incident support arrangements in place at all levels with established multi-agency plans, practice and experience around incident support.

3.23 Areas to focus on

There may be opportunities for the Service to build and broaden its incident support capacity as part of a collaborative approach with other services.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 The final report of the LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge of NFRS will be published on the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service website and intranet. In response to the 'areas to focus on' that are identified in the report, actions have been identified and incorporated where significant into NFRS's Service Plan. This will enable delivery to be monitored regularly by NFRS Board and through performance reporting to Members.

5. Other Implications

5.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This report is not making proposals that will have a direct impact on equality of access or outcomes for diverse and/or protected groups.

5.2 Environmental Implications

This report is not making proposals that will have environmental implications.

6. Section 17 - Crime and Disorder Act

- 6.1 There are no direct implications of this report relating to the Crime and Disorder Act. It is likely, however, that aspects of the final report on the LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge of NFRS and the subsequent action plan will have some implications for community safety and so S17 of the Crime and Disorder Act. These have yet to be determined.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the findings of the LGA/CFOA Peer Challenge.

Background Papers

The LGA/CFOA (2012) 'Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge Toolkit' is available from the LGA website, as follows –

http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=f303f22f-0707-43b0-83c1-3f7223cadb2a&groupId=10180

Officer Contact

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CFOA
Chief Fire Officers
Association



Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Fire Peer Challenge Report

1. Introduction, context and purpose

Introduction

This report outlines the key findings from the Local Government Association's (LGA) Fire Peer Challenge at Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in January 2014.

The report provides further detail on the Key Areas of Assessment as follows:

- Community risk management (including information management).
- Prevention.
- Protection.
- Response.
- Health and safety and welfare.
- Training and development.
- Call management and incident support.

It also considers the areas of leadership and corporate capacity, including the following questions:

- How well are outcomes for local citizens being achieved?
- How effective is leadership and governance?
- How effective is organisational capacity, in terms of meeting current requirements and future needs?

Fire peer challenge is part of sector led improvement. The NFRS Fire Peer Challenge took place from the 28 to 31 January 2014 and consisted of a range of on-site activities including interviews, focus groups and fire and rescue station visits.

The peer team met with a broad cross-section of Officers, staff, front-line firefighters, partners and Elected Members.

During the challenge the peer team were very well looked after and people the team met were fully engaged with the process and open and honest.

The peer team undertook background reading provided to them in advance, including the NFRS Operational Assessment.

The evidence and feedback gathered was assimilated into broad themes and was delivered to NFRS on the final day of the challenge.

Context and purpose

The Operational Assessment self-assessment process is designed to:

- Form a structured and consistent basis to drive continuous improvement within the Fire and Rescue Service.

- Provide Elected Members on Fire Authorities and Chief Officers with information that allows them to challenge their operational service delivery to ensure it is efficient, effective and robust.

The peer challenge process aims to help Fire Authorities strengthen local accountability and further develop the way they evaluate and improve services. Fire peer challenge is a voluntary process that is managed by and delivered for the sector. It is not a form of inspection.

2. The Peer Challenge Team

Fire peer challenges are managed and delivered by the sector for the sector and peers are at the heart of the process. They help Fire and Rescue Services with their improvement and learning by providing a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge.

The peer challenge team for NFRS was:

- Mick Green, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Councillor Jeremy Hilton, Gloucestershire County Council and the national Liberal Democrat Lead for Fire and Rescue.
- Darren Dovey, Area Manager, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Denis O'Driscoll, Area Manager, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Chris Bowron, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association.

3. Leadership and governance

Strengths

- Managerial leadership of the Service is held in very high regard.
- The new Portfolio Holder is quickly getting up to speed and demonstrates a good understanding of the issues facing the Service.
- The Service has enjoyed consistent support from Elected Members over the years.
- The Fire and Rescue Service has taken time to develop the understanding of the new Scrutiny Panel and this has been well worthwhile.
- There has been effective delivery of a savings programme over recent years and the Service is trusted by the Senior Officer team at Norfolk County Council to deliver on its savings programme going forward

The managerial leadership of the Service is held in high regard by all the staff, Elected Members and representatives of partner organisations that we spoke to. The new Portfolio Holder, who is the third person in the role in three years, has quickly got up to speed and he demonstrates a good understanding of the issues facing the Service both in the short and long term. Whilst there has been significant change politically in Norfolk over the years, the Service has enjoyed consistent support from Elected Members. The Fire and Rescue Service has invested time in developing the understanding of the new Members of the Scrutiny Panel and the dividends from this can be seen in the form of their knowledge, interest and passion in the Service.

Savings of more than £3million have been secured by the Service in the last three years. Moving forward, the Service has a target of reducing its budget by a further £2.2m, as part of the overall County Council requirement to save nearly £190m over the next three years. £2.2m represents a significant proportion of the current net revenue budget of around £30m and £1.77m of that is required in the first year (2014/15) – which equates to 9% of the current budget. However, the Service is clearly trusted by the Senior Officer team at the County Council to deliver on its target.

Areas to focus on

- The move to a new set of governance arrangements within the County Council needs to be carefully handled through its transition.
- The financial environment and changing nature of the demands on the Service will require change and adaptation over time – which will require significant strength of political leadership.
- All opportunities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness through collaboration should continue to be explored and taken forward to a conclusion.
- There is a need for a strategic vision that takes the Service beyond the horizon set by the budget plans for the next three years – people are looking to you to provide this.

- Establishing such a vision will provide a clear framework within which to develop thinking and planning.
- There is a need for a clear narrative regarding the way the future savings will be achieved.

Norfolk County Council is moving to a committee system of governance in May this year. There will be a requirement for the Fire and Rescue Service to adapt to that system in order to ensure it continues to inform and engage Elected Members effectively and secure their support for new policies and plans. The Service is clearly aware that the move to the new arrangements, which are still in the process of being developed, represents a major transition.

The financial environment and changing nature of the demands on the Service will require change and adaptation over time. It is unlikely that the Service will either need or be able to continue to operate exactly in its current form over the longer term. Indeed, many staff identified opportunities to re-configure frontline resources to deliver efficiencies whilst maintaining effective delivery. Delivering such changes will require significant strength of political leadership.

People we spoke to are looking to the senior leadership to provide a strategic vision that takes the Service beyond the horizon set by the budget plans for the next three years. The Service would benefit from establishing a clear vision of where it wants and needs to be in 2020. This must be achievable and will require elected member support. Establishing such a vision will provide a clear framework within which to develop thinking and planning, including in relation to the focusing and deployment of resources.

Whilst the financial savings target for the next three years is now determined and the senior leadership of the Service has worked through how they will be achieved, there is as yet no clear narrative that outlines this. Staff we spoke to at a range of levels were unclear what the savings requirement was and how it would be addressed. There is a need urgently to develop this narrative and communicate it through the organisation.

4. Outcomes

Strengths

- Anecdotal evidence suggests the Service is highly valued by the communities of Norfolk and partners.
- It has handled a number of recent high profile events very well.
- There is very good overall performance in relation to family group such as RDS availability, reduction in number of primary fires and expenditure per head of population.
- Overview and Scrutiny has taken the time to consider performance and are satisfied with it.
- Continued investment and development of operational capability has served to enhance outcomes.

- There is a range of effective community engagement programmes that have been established eg Princes Trust, links through adult social care to vulnerable citizens.

Feedback provided to us by partner organisations and Elected Members, and press coverage seen by the team, indicates the Service is highly valued by the communities of Norfolk and partners. The Service is seen to have been very effective in its handling of a number of recent high profile events, including the United States Air Force helicopter crash, the tidal surge and the industrial dispute.

There is very good overall performance by the Service when compared to similar Fire and Rescue Services within Norfolk's 'family group'. These include Retained Duty System (RDS) availability, with availability in Norfolk at 88.5% against an average of 77%. Expenditure on the Fire and Rescue Service per head of population is the lowest, at £33. Other areas to highlight are the reduction in the number of primary fires and the major improvements in response capability to address local area risks since 2007, including flooding. The Scrutiny Panel has taken the time to consider performance and is satisfied with it, although they did take the opportunity to probe the issue of increased sickness absence levels.

As we will outline at various points through this report, continued investment in the Service and the development of operational capability has served to enhance outcomes for local people. This also applies to the range of effective community engagement programmes that have been established and which the Service is involved with, including the Princes Trust and the links with Adult Social Care.

Areas to focus on

- There is the potential to have a positive impact on broader community outcomes.
- Scope for improvement in some family group indicators:
 - Deaths from accidental dwelling fires per 100k population are above average.
 - Deliberate Primary Fires (excluding vehicles) per 10k population.
 - Percentage of fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted.

Overall the Service is performing well and is seen to be an efficient and effective one. However, there is the potential to have a positive impact on broader community outcomes through closer linkages with other emergency services, with 'Co-responding' in conjunction with the Ambulance Service being an example. There is also scope for improvement in relation to some 'family group' performance indicators. Deaths from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 citizens, at 0.58 in Norfolk, are high when compared to the average of 0.38. Deliberate Primary Fires (excluding vehicles) per 10,000 people are also high – with a figure of 1.97 in Norfolk compared to an average

of 1.72 across similar areas. The percentage of fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted is 39.5% in Norfolk compared to an average elsewhere of 30.8%.

5. Organisational capacity

Strengths

- We have met high quality staff who are strongly committed to the communities of Norfolk and to delivering a very effective service.
- The Service is achieving a lot from within its resources – but it also has the scope to develop things further.
- The Service has been successful in drawing in external funding.
- There is evidence of an increasing ‘management grip’ within the organisation.

During the peer challenge we met high quality staff who are strongly committed to the communities of Norfolk and to delivering a very effective service. They are a credit to the Service and to Norfolk County Council.

The Service is achieving a lot from within its existing resources but it also has the scope to develop things further and has a desire to do so, for example around having a positive impact on broader community outcomes and extending the way it collaborates within and beyond the county.

The Service has been successful in drawing in external funding and this can be seen in the quality and range of operational appliances and equipment available within the Service.

There is evidence of an increasing ‘management grip’ within the organisation. Sickness absence had been seen to increase in recent times but a concerted and rigorous effort has been made around this and improvement has been seen. The availability of information to help manage the Service is seen to have been enhanced under the leadership of the Chief Fire Officer and is being used to good effect.

Areas to focus on

- There is an increasing project and programme management focus but there are still a large number of initiatives that are all seen as a priority and we do not believe these can be sustained.
- Given how much the Service is involved in there is a need to ensure that its activities are fully and effectively focused – evaluation.
- The Service is seen as ‘capital rich’ but there is a question about this funding over the longer-term and revenue implications.
- In delivering savings to date the emphasis has been placed on the ‘back office’ – this area is now seen to be ‘feeling the pinch’ and containing ‘single points of knowledge’.
- Middle management visibility needs to be enhanced.

- Station visits highlighted limited involvement in planning and training on new equipment.
- We would encourage the Service to develop its thinking around succession planning and talent management.

NFRS staff spoke of an increasing project and programme management focus within the Service but there are concerns that there are still a large number of initiatives that are all seen as a priority. Many staff indicated that they felt this cannot be sustained and the evidence we received led us to agree with them. There is the need for a prioritisation exercise to be undertaken in order to help focus resources and people's attention on what is most important. Alongside this, given that the Service is involved in a wide range of activities and projects there is a need to ensure that its activities are fully and effectively focused. There needs to be the development of greater rigour in relation to the evaluation of the Service's activities in order to ensure maximum benefit is being gleaned from the way resources are utilised.

The Service is seen as 'capital rich', in terms of the assets it has available to it and the continued investment that it is able to make, although we recognise that a good proportion of that investment comes in the form of external funding that the Service has secured. However, there is a question about the Service's capital funding over the longer-term and there were also concerns expressed that the revenue implications of capital expenditure on equipment are not always fully thought through prior to investment being made. The Service would benefit from taking stock regarding its capital programme generally and should ensure the impact of potential future capital investment on revenue spending is modelled and woven into budget planning.

In delivering savings to date the emphasis has been placed on the 'back office'. Whilst this is seen to have protected the 'front-line', the support functions are now seen to be 'feeling the pinch' and containing 'single points of knowledge', for example around IT systems, which generates risk. There is a growing awareness that the distinction between 'front-line' and 'back office' is an artificial one and that further cuts in the latter will start to pose risks to operational effectiveness and delivery.

From our fire and rescue station visits it is clear that senior managers are visible and felt to make the effort to engage with front-line staff. However, middle management visibility is felt to be much lower and needs to be enhanced. Station visits also highlighted limited opportunities being provided to firefighters to be involved in planning the purchase of new equipment and having limited training provided to them when it was deployed.

Finally, we would encourage the Service to develop its thinking around succession planning and talent management. There are clearly a lot of very talented people within the Service and opportunities to enable them to grow and develop need to be maximised.

6. Community risk management

Strengths

- The Fire Information Unit provides a wealth of information that provides an accurate assessment of community risk.
- Recent high profile incidents have demonstrated the Service's ability to deal effectively with risks.
- Business continuity arrangements have been successfully tested during recent industrial action.
- Performance management is embedded.
- Priority based budgeting is assisting in ensuring resources are used to effectively deliver the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

The Fire Intelligence Unit provides a wealth of information that provides an accurate assessment of community risk. This is reflected positively within the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and provides the basis for sound risk reduction. The trial of 'Tidal Crewing' at Gorleston is an example of the Service's willingness to utilise information analysis to further enhance operational performance and outcomes to communities.

Recent high profile incidents have demonstrated the Service's ability to deal effectively with risks. The tidal surge of December 2013 placed a significant burden on the Authority and its partner agencies but this was successfully managed through pre-planning and the identification of appropriate and adequate water rescue assets which were deployed efficiently and effectively.

Business continuity arrangements have been successfully tested during recent industrial action. The Service established a critical resilience planning group which successfully implemented resilience crewing arrangements and included stakeholder communications and employee engagement to mitigate risk.

Performance management is embedded. The Service has a suite of performance indicators which staff utilise to measure outcomes. 'LiveView' enables employees to have easy access to current data and evidence suggested that this led to greater ownership of issues.

Priority based budgeting is assisting in ensuring resources are used effectively to deliver the IRMP. It is clear that this process has ensured that the Service has been able to make difficult decisions on how to reduce its budget through a process of organisational prioritisation.

Areas to focus on

- Whilst the Integrated Risk Management Plan has been drawn up and consulted on, there could have been better opportunity given to staff and partners to be engaged in its development.
- Retained Duty System availability in some locations remains challenging.

Whilst the IRMP has been drawn up and consulted on, there could have been better opportunity given to staff to be engaged in its development and for a wider range of partners to have been involved at an earlier stage. The team felt that the organisation was potentially missing an opportunity to harness a willingness by both groups to help shape future service delivery.

RDS availability in some locations remains challenging. We would encourage the Service to explore how other Authorities have redesigned their RDS terms and conditions to see whether these may be appropriate for implementation in those areas where availability continues to cause concern.

7. Information management

Strengths

- The Service utilises a range of systems to gather, collate and analyse relevant information.
- 'LiveView' provides an effective method of accessing information on a self-service basis.
- Performance management is supported by an accessible and live performance dashboard.
- The Information Management Team is aware of the need to rationalise systems and utilise, where appropriate, the resources available via the County Council.

The Service utilises a range of systems to gather, collate and analyse relevant information. The Information Management Team have a full understanding of the Service's needs and how the systems employed receive, analyse and deliver information that is both relevant and useful.

Performance management is supported by an accessible and live performance dashboard. 'Live View' provides an effective method of accessing information on a self-service basis, enabling the user to access current information which supports and engenders ownership to ensure the Service uses its resources as effectively as possible to improve community outcomes.

The Information Management Team is aware of the need to rationalise systems and utilise, where appropriate, the resources available via Norfolk County Council. There is a need to ensure that closer working with the county council drives real efficiencies whilst ensuring that the Service's specific needs are provided for.

Areas to focus on

- We would encourage the development of an information management strategy.
- The Service recognises that it has weaknesses in document management and there needs to be clarity regarding who is leading on this area.

- Quality assurance around 'LiveView' data needs to be enhanced.

We would encourage the development of an information management strategy. Although there was recognition that rationalisation of existing information systems was needed, we did not feel that there was clarity on how this would be achieved and to what end. There is significant willingness but a lack of strategic direction.

The Service recognises that it has weaknesses in document management and there needs to be clarity regarding who is leading on this area of work. Greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring that the Service's policy documents are up to date and that a robust process is employed to ensure regular and auditable reviews take place.

Quality assurance around 'LiveView' data needs to be enhanced. Although the team were impressed by the availability of information, some concerns were expressed within the organisation regarding the accuracy of some of that information.

8. Prevention

Strengths

- There is a clear set of Prevention priorities articulated in the Integrated Risk Management Plan and these are clearly understood by staff across the Service.
- There is very good partnership and collaboration with adult social care and mental health for identifying vulnerable people for home fire risk checks.
- The Service is seen to be leading the partnership approach to youth engagement and development across the county.
- Staff at fire station level are using Mosaic and Pinpoint to target citizens most at risk.

There is a clear and consistent set of prevention priorities articulated through the IRMP and the prevention strategy. These are written in such a way as to be easily understood by the public, partner agencies and staff across the Service. Staff are enthusiastic and engaged with the prevention agenda. The performance management of prevention activities is embedded within the Service, through the departmental planning process, personal appraisal objectives and the inclusion of prevention performance indicators on both the Service and Scrutiny Panel dashboard.

The Service has a number of partnership and collaboration work streams and activities with a range of prevention partners. These work streams and activities are very diverse in nature and range from single interventions with particular community groups through to longer term collaborations aimed at the ongoing targeting of the most vulnerable within the communities of Norfolk. One of the most notable of these partnerships is that forged with

adult social care and mental health for the identification of vulnerable people for home fire risk checks.

The Service is heavily engaged in a range of youth engagement activities including a Fire Cadet Scheme, the Princes Trust and Crucial Crew, an activity that brings together a wide range of partners to deliver safety messages to schools in a co-ordinated way. As well as being run very efficiently, all schemes and staff involved are self-funding. The leading role the Service plays in the organisation of these activities enhances the reputation of the Service within communities, particularly amongst young people, and also gives the Service the kudos of being the 'go-to' agency in relation to youth engagement work in the county.

In order to assist front-line operational crews to target their community safety activity, the Service utilises Mosaic data via the Pinpoint system. This allows crews to deliver community safety activity in the form of home fire risk checks in the most efficient manner by ensuring that the addresses that are targeted are those that fall into high-risk categories. However, some front-line staff did articulate that they felt improvements could be made to the method of completing home fire risk checks and therefore we would encourage the Service to speak to front-line staff to capture these suggestions.

Areas to focus on

- The draft Prevention Strategy is close to being finished but we would suggest the inclusion of an action plan of how it is to be delivered over the lifetime of the Integrated Risk Management Plan.
- There is an opportunity to better utilise RDS personnel to gather intelligence, profile communities and deliver services to the vulnerable in rural communities.
- Partners perceive the Service as reducing its involvement in the road safety agenda but the facts and reasons behind this are unclear and we suggest a dialogue around it.

A draft prevention strategy linked to the draft IRMP is in the process of being completed. We would encourage the Service to implement this strategy as soon as the IRMP has been agreed by the County Council. We suggest the strategy should be expanded to show how the priorities are to be delivered over the lifetime of the IRMP through the inclusion of an action plan that articulates both who is responsible and what resources are required to successfully deliver the strategy.

The Service would benefit from putting in place a consistent method of evaluating its prevention activities and partnerships to ensure that its scarce resources are targeted in the most efficient way. Whilst the Service has a diverse range of partnership activity, which is seen to be delivering benefits in the form of outputs and outcomes, the peer team felt that some of these activities were being entered into without any evidence as to whether the groups being targeted were indeed at any higher risk than the general population. In addition there was little evidence of ongoing analysis as to

whether the activities were delivering benefits in terms of tangible outcomes. A more robust and consistent undertaking of evaluation would help to ensure that the Service can target its partnership activities in the most efficient manner and towards those most at risk.

Whilst it is recognised that the Service has a well-established volunteer scheme, it was felt that there is scope for the Service to more fully utilise RDS staff for the delivery of community safety activities. This could have the dual benefit of being able to deliver community safety activity into hard to reach rural communities and at the same time engage the RDS workforce in a broader range of fire and rescue service activities beyond their normal response remit. This in turn may re-engage those RDS staff at stations with limited call numbers. However, it is recognised that any additional activity carried out by the RDS must be achieved within the current RDS cost base. Therefore we would suggest that the Service look at ways of recycling, into targeted prevention activity, any savings from reduced response activity. Examples include the extension of the Automatic Fire Alarms policy and reducing unnecessary attendances at road traffic collisions by improved information exchange with the Ambulance Service.

Whilst the Service is a member of the Norfolk Road Casualty Reduction Partnership and engages in road safety initiatives, some prevention partners felt that the Service's involvement was not clear or consistent. This manifested itself in what was seen to be a withdrawing by the Service from some initiatives without discussions with partners. The Service should re-assess its strategic intent in regards to road safety in order to show how it is to fulfil this strategic prevention objective and give confidence to partner agencies as to the Service's continuing support in this important area.

9. Protection

Strengths

- There is a good ethos around regulatory work, with a good balance between assisting and enforcing with businesses.
- Protection function is well integrated with operations, with processes in place for the sharing of risk information.
- The Service's approach is well regarded by protection partners and seen as a motivating force and catalyst to effective partnership working in the county.
- The Service is pro-active in regard to national and regional structures and has good horizon scanning processes in place.
- The Service makes effective and innovative use of its relatively small protection resources.
- An automatic fire alarm policy has been introduced and plans are in place to extend the progressive risk based approach in order to release efficiencies to other priorities.

We found protection to be a specific area of strength within the Service. The protection function is well led with clear, unambiguous priorities and a solid

risk based inspection programme. There was a good ethos to the regulatory work, involving a good balance with supporting the local economy through assisting, wherever possible, to help businesses comply with relevant statutory requirements. However, when required, proportionate enforcement action is taken in accordance with best practice.

The Service is well regarded by protection partners and is seen as a motivating force and catalyst to effective partnership working in the county. Many of the initiatives and joint enforcement activity appears to have been led by the Service from inception through to implementation. In addition, all protection partners reported a positive working relationship with staff from the Service and also highlighted what they saw as increasing consistency in regard to advice and enforcement activity. Of particular note were the partnership activities with Environmental Health Officers and landlords in the county in relation to fire safety in houses of multiple occupation and with adult social care around fire safety standards in residential care homes.

Those working in protection are pro-active at the national and regional level and there are good horizon scanning processes in place. This ensures that the Service is able to plan in advance of any proposed legislative or other changes in order to ensure it continues to make effective use of its relatively small resources. This approach also allows the Service to be innovative, as evidenced by the NFRS role in the development of the one-stop web site for businesses and information sharing with the Police through the 'Best Bar None' scheme.

The protection function is well integrated with operations with policy and processes in place for the sharing of risk information. This ensures that front-line firefighting crews have access to risk information via the mobile data terminals (MDT) on front-line appliances within a very short space of time of them being discovered by a member of protection staff.

An automatic fire alarm policy has been introduced and is starting to have an effect on reducing unnecessary mobilisations. There is a plan in place to extend this on a progressive risk based approach through the introduction of more robust call challenging within fire control in addition to increasing the range of premises that are brought within the scope of the policy. The full implementation of this policy will allow resources to be released for use in higher priority areas.

Areas to focus on

- The draft Protection Strategy is close to being finished but we would suggest the inclusion of an action plan of how it is to be delivered over the lifetime of the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

A draft protection strategy linked to the draft IRMP is in the process of being completed. We would encourage the Service to implement this strategy as soon as the IRMP has been agreed by the County Council. The strategy could usefully be expanded to show how the priorities are to be delivered over

the lifetime of the IRMP through the inclusion of an action plan that articulates both who is responsible and what resources are required to successfully deliver the strategy. A key component of this strategy should be to embed the partnership activity through the use of Memoranda of Understanding and Service Level Agreements in order to ensure its consistency and longevity.

10. Response

Strengths

- The Service deserves credit for taking the decision several years ago to invest in integrated technology to place NFRS ahead of the game and this has delivered significant benefit eg automatic vehicle location system.
- The Service has high quality appliances and equipment and skilled staff which enables the mitigation of local area risks.
- Effective systems are in place to maintain up to date operational procedures and practices eg Steering Group, Collaborative Partnership.
- An effective response capability has been maintained during recent industrial action.
- The reduction of 32 firefighting posts has been managed effectively to maintain the safety of communities and staff.

The Service deserves credit for its forward thinking approach following incidents such as the Sun Valley fire in 1993 in recognising the potential benefits of technology in reducing risk. Pioneering work with MDTs and developments such as providing Tom Tom devices for Officers has assisted in risk mitigation and overall incident management. Automatic vehicle location systems have been in place for ten years and have been honed to improve their use. We saw that these types of systems were not only embedded and effective but were also accepted and appreciated by NFRS operational staff.

We noted the quality and range of operational appliances and equipment available within the Service. Significant investment had been made in this area, particularly following the 2007 flooding. Further investment is underway to strengthen things even more. Operational staff are aware and appreciative of this investment. NFRS now appears to be well prepared for the range of risks that it faces and the capabilities that it now has during events such as the recent storm surge provides good reassurance to its local communities.

There is sound practice around maintaining and updating operational procedures. The Service recognises the benefits of collaborative working and is a member of the Collaborative Partnership around operational policy and procedure. Operational information that we saw was well written in the main and older guidance such as the BMO-07 Mobilising and Crewing Policy was in the process of being updated with a more appropriate format and content.

An effective Response capability has been maintained during recent industrial action. In addition, operational staff and Trade Union representatives were

universally positive regarding the local management of the current national dispute.

The reduction of 32 firefighting posts has been managed effectively to maintain the safety of communities and staff. This should provide confidence and reassurance to the Service for any further such changes that may be considered in the future.

Areas to focus on

- There is the opportunity for the Operational Improvement Programme to lead to the development of a longer-term (5-15 year) Response vision and strategy, accepted and understood by internal and external stakeholders.
- There is scope to broaden the empowerment of middle managers to influence and drive strategic improvements and changes.
- Scope exists to further develop and prepare staff and other key stakeholders to embrace current and future Response challenges.
- Many people that we met saw opportunities to re-configure frontline resources to deliver efficiencies whilst maintaining effective delivery.

Whilst the Service has clear plans in place for the next three to five years, there is a lack of a longer term vision or plan beyond this timeframe. As a result, staff at a range of levels do not have a clear understanding of what the priorities of the Service will be beyond the life of the draft IRMP. The Operational Improvement Programme provides the opportunity to develop a longer-term vision and strategy, with Response at the heart of this.

There is scope to broaden the empowerment of middle managers to influence and drive strategic improvements and changes. We were impressed by the quality of operational staff that we met. There was evidence of strong commitment to the Service and an identification of talent at all levels. However, some frustration was expressed that the Service was not fully recognising or utilising this. Staff also expressed a wish to be further involved in decision-making processes at the more formative stages.

Scope exists to further develop and prepare staff and other key stakeholders to embrace current and future Response challenges. Like all Fire and Rescue Services, NFRS is likely to continue to face significant challenges in the future, not least driven by the financial climate. The Service may wish to consider if more could be done to prepare it, and the people within it, to meet these challenges and to consider what has been successful in other Services.

Many staff identified opportunities to re-configure frontline resources to deliver efficiencies whilst maintaining effective delivery. Whilst NFRS delivers an effective Response service, peer team members and a number of staff that we met recognised that there is scope for further improvement and efficiency. This could range from the re-configuration of the positioning of existing assets in some areas to the further reduction in operational staffing numbers without any material detriment to outcomes.

11. Health and safety

Strengths

- There is clear strategic leadership and ownership of Health and Safety, with clear responsibilities established.
- The Service is benefiting from actively engaging in the regional Health and Safety peer review process.
- Operational assurance and operational risk management processes are robust and embedded
- A process exists for receiving information relating to operational incidents of national interest (Shirley Towers), carrying out gap analysis and implementing any required improvements.

The peer team found that there is a strong Health and Safety culture within the Service. There is clear strategic leadership and ownership of Health and Safety throughout the Service up to and including the Chief Fire Officer. There is clear delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer to lead this function within the Service and also clear understanding on the part of managers regarding their Health and Safety responsibilities. In addition, there is a clear suite of policies and procedures setting out responsibilities and processes in line with HSG 65. To support this, the Service underwent an audit of its Health and Safety function in 2013, which was delivered by the Mott MacDonald Group, and the findings from this showed that the Service was “generally complying with HSG 65” with some areas of improvement required.

Staff in the Health and Safety Department are committed, enthusiastic and pro-active in moving the Health and Safety agenda forward. To this end the Service has agreed to be part of a regional peer review process looking specifically at Health and Safety and while some concerns have been raised within the Service about the capacity of staff to be able to contribute to this, the peer team feel that there are tangible benefits to doing so. These include the Service learning ideas from elsewhere and the opportunity to work collaboratively with other brigades on similar issues, thus enhancing organisational capacity and avoiding duplication.

From an operational perspective there were robust and embedded operational assurance and operational risk management processes in place. These included a maintenance of competency programme at station level, an incident command assessment and competency programme at all levels and a comprehensive operational monitoring process which allowed information about performance to be fed back into the organisation in a way that closed the feedback loop and promoted continued improvement.

A process exists, overseen by the operations steering group, for receiving information relating to operational incidents of national interest (such as Rule 43 recommendations from Shirley Towers), carrying out gap analysis and implementing any required improvements. This ensures that the Service is

able to learn and improve based on the outcomes of events that take place in other service areas.

Areas to focus on

- Completing the implementation of the recommendations of the Mott McDonald Health and Safety audit should be prioritised.
- There is a need to embed the process for receiving Health and Safety information into the Service (eg the Health and Safety Framework) in order to ensure gap analysis and improvement actions are captured, actioned, monitored and closed off.
- The Fire Brigades Union has chosen not to be represented on the Health and Safety Committee, unlike the arrangement in many other parts of the country – we believe this generates risks and inefficiency.
- There is a need to embed Welfare into Health and Safety systems and culture.
- The Service should consider reviewing its arrangements for medicals and fitness testing in order to comply with best practice nationally and ensure compliance with relevant regulatory requirements.

In regard to the 2013 Mott McDonald Health and Safety audit and related report, priority needs to be given to closing off on the improvement actions contained within it. Whilst we are aware that these actions are being monitored at County Council level, there was a level of concern amongst some staff that some of the actions would not be completed within the timescales set out within the report. In addition, we felt that further improvement could be made over and above the recommendations contained within the report in the areas of risk assessment and document management, the latter being an area that the Service itself has identified for improvement.

Whilst we found that there are processes in place to achieve operational improvements, this should be replicated in regards to Health and Safety information. We did not find any structured process for receiving Health and Safety information into the Service (including the Health and Safety Framework and reports from the Health and Safety Executive) that then allowed the Service to be able to carry out a gap analysis and ensure any improvement actions are captured, actioned, monitored and closed off.

During the review we noted from various sources that there is no Fire Brigades Union representation on the Service Health and Safety Committee. This appeared at odds to similar committees in other Services where all representative bodies attended to represent their members in matters of Health and Safety. It would appear that this decision has been taken unilaterally by the Fire Brigades Union and that management have made efforts to try and resolve the issue. However the Service should recognise that there are risks associated with this and should therefore discuss this again with the Fire Brigades Union and encourage them to consult with their regional and national colleagues as to their reasoning for non-attendance.

We have outlined above that the Health and Safety culture and leadership within the organisation is strong. However, there was a feeling amongst staff that welfare took a lower priority within the Service. We feel that Service leadership needs to address this perception, especially in light of the fact that the Service has been through a budget cutting process, some of which has resulted in redundancies and left current staff feeling somewhat vulnerable. Issues such as the lack of adequate canteen facilities at headquarters and the sustainability of the well regarded critical incident support provision were raised as concerns. As the Service embarks on its plans for the next three years, as set out in the IRMP, the Service should be mindful of this issue. One suggestion would be to perhaps widen the remit of the Health and Safety Committee to include welfare.

The Service itself has identified that its arrangements for medicals and fitness testing are not in line with many other Fire and Rescue Services. Whilst it is appreciated that there is a cost implication in regard to this provision it is felt that a review of this area is required in order to ensure the Service is in line with best practice in the sector and well placed to meet any future regulatory requirements.

12. Training and development

Strengths

- The Service has a clear training and development strategy supported by a comprehensive training needs analysis.
- The Service has recognised the challenges of delivering training to a large geographical area and has implemented innovative methods to enhance consistency and delivery.
- The Service deserves credit for taking an approach of developing training courses tailored to local risks and needs which have achieved national accreditation.
- The Training and Development Department restructure is delivering a more flexible and efficient service.
- There is a proactive approach to elected member training and development.

The Service has a clear training and development strategy supported by a comprehensive training needs analysis (TNA). The TNA is generic, area and individual-specific – which enables the organisation to tailor the training delivery to meet specific local risks whilst ensuring all firefighters have sufficient input on core skills and development.

The Service has recognised the challenges of delivering training to a large geographical area and has implemented innovative methods to enhance consistency and delivery. It should be commended for introducing a number of improvements to training delivery such as a new outreach centre at King's Lynn, weekend training and the utilisation of Microsoft Lync to deliver live lectures to a number of locations at the same time.

The Service also deserves credit for taking an approach of developing training courses tailored to local risks and needs which have achieved national accreditation. Of particular note is the initial incident command level 3 qualification which is accredited through Edexcel.

The Training and Development Department restructure is delivering a more flexible and efficient service. Although the change has not been without its challenges, it is clear that the new structure is beginning to deliver a more cost effective service delivery model which is able to flex to variable demand levels and represents a more agile approach to training.

There is a proactive approach to elected member training and development. The team was impressed by the approach the Service had taken to ensuring that newly Elected Members, where possible, have an induction programme to ensure they both understand how the Service operates and where the challenges lie.

Areas to focus on

- Recent changes in the way the Training and Development Department is delivering training has led to some negative perceptions regarding the quality and credibility of some of the training – the management of the Service are aware of this perception and are working to rectify it.
- There would seem to be an emphasis placed on operational requirements in the Service's training and development provision.
- Work is going into finding a suitable site for fire behaviour training but this has not yet been successfully concluded.

Recent changes in the way the Training and Development Department is delivering training has led to some negative perceptions regarding the quality and credibility of some of the training – the management of the Service are aware of this perception and are working to rectify it.

There would seem to be an emphasis placed on operational requirements in the Service's training and development provision. The team recognise the importance of ensuring that operational competencies are developed and maintained. However, the Service needs to ensure that this is suitably balanced with broader staff development, including that of support staff and managers. Senior management development is limited and this, in the review team's opinion, may create longer term challenges in relation to talent management and succession planning.

Work is going in to finding a suitable new site for fire behaviour training but this has not yet been successfully concluded. Although the Service recognises this and has contingency plans in place there are risks associated with not resolving this as quickly as possible. The Service is also in the process of procuring a live fire training unit to provide multi-scenario real fire experience training.

Additionally the Service should consider further developing its facilities to ensure they provide firefighters with as realistic a training environment as possible to mitigate the continued fall in incident exposure.

13. Call management and incident support

Strengths

- Previous investment that has been made in Control staff and functions is now paying dividends – performance, positive national reputation and benefit to partner organisations.
- Clear partnering plans are in place to deliver improved resilience of call management – East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium.
- There are proven effective incident support arrangements in place at all levels, with further developments planned such as the new Command Unit.
- There are established multi-agency plans, practice and experience around incident support – and these have been proven to be effective.

It is clear that the Control function has been an area of focus and investment by the Service for a number of years. The effective use of technology and having motivated and well trained staff are producing very positive results. Performance against local target times to answer 999 calls within 5 seconds and mobilise within 60 seconds are both marginally above target at 97% and 75.5% respectively. NFRS Control is recognised nationally for best practice and there is a willingness to share this with partner agencies. There is a developing culture of enabling Control staff to make decisions within procedural guidelines but allowing for their professional judgement rather than strict implementation of prescribed rules. This is seen as positive and recognises the status of Control staff performance.

The Service is part of the East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium, which will lead to improved resilience and an upgraded mobilising system (Vision 4).

There are proven effective incident support arrangements in place at all levels, with further developments planned such as the new Command Unit. There is evidence of positive linkage between Control and stations. All Control staff have spent a day on a watch within the last three years. This is an example of practice that has mitigated the risk of issues related to Control that have been identified in Rule 43 recommendations in recent years.

There are established multi-agency plans, practice and experience around incident support and these have been proven to be effective when the Service has successfully dealt recently with a number of high profile incidents. This has required not only the preparation and practicing of incident support arrangements but their execution as well.

Areas to focus on

- Whilst current and future arrangements and plans for call management are sound, what is the vision and strategy for the longer-term?
- Given many people see opportunities to re-configure frontline resources, there could be the potential to broaden the types of incident support that the Service offers in a multi-agency setting.

The East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium will result in improved resilience and performance but each Service will retain its own Control room. NFRS's Control function is impressive but at a cost of approximately £1m per annum, within a reducing budget situation, consideration should be given to where NFRS would wish to position itself beyond the lifespan of that project. NFRS needs to develop a vision and strategy for the longer-term.

Given many people see opportunities to re-configure frontline resources, there could be the potential to broaden the types of incident support that the Service offers in a multi-agency setting. Being duly recognised for the success of its call management systems, the Service may wish to consider how this capability could be broadened beyond the more traditional current arrangements. The provision of related services for other agencies, or possibly the private sector, could provide opportunities to ensure that the current arrangements remain cost effective.

Conclusion and contact information

Through the peer challenge process we have sought to highlight the many positive aspects of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. We have also outlined some areas that the Service will wish to focus on moving forward. It has been our aim to provide some further detail through this report in order to help the Service consider the key issues.

Thank you to NFRS for commissioning the challenge and to everyone involved for their participation. The team are particularly grateful for the support provided in both the preparation for the review and during the on-site week. All of us connected with the peer challenge would like to wish the service and partner organisations every success in the future.

For more information regarding the Fire Peer Challenge of NFRS please contact:

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