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Welcome and forward

Chief Fire Officer Darren Dovey (Left)
Councillor André González De Savage (Right)



We are very pleased to present Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's Community Protection Plan (CPP) 2017-2020, Action Plan for 2017-18. This highlights the key projects we are proposing to undertake during this period, which will lead to making Northamptonshire safer.

In 2014-15, English Fire and Rescue Services attended the second lowest number of fires on record and fire fatalities are at their lowest recorded figure to date. This focus on community safety has seen your Fire and Rescue Service evolve into a leader in the field of prevention and protection, and as such whilst our operational demands have been significantly reduced 'your firefighters are now busier than ever'. However it is now crucial that we build on this success and utilise our expertise across a wider range of areas in order to contribute, in particular, across the wider health and social care agenda.

The Service is committed to delivering a high performing Fire and Rescue Service, which provides excellent value for money to the taxpayers. Our collaboration with Northamptonshire Police, East Midlands Ambulance Service and other partners ensures that we are joined up in delivering solutions to the key issues affecting our communities in making Northamptonshire safer.

This action plan not only sets out how the Service will meet the financial challenges for the year 2017-2018 as outlined in the CPP 2017-2020 but sets the foundations for future years to ensure that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is able to maintain an efficient and effective Service in the future.

A key component in delivering this plan will be our staff, and as such we need to ensure that we continue to invest in their development in order that they too can meet the demands of the future. In addition the Service also has a well-earned reputation for innovation and has over recent years maximised on new technologies, which has made us more effective at doing our jobs and has assisted in keeping firefighters safer. Therefore we will continue to invest in new technologies where they add value to the Service.

Introduction

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework to which fire authorities must have regard when discharging their functions.

The 2012 Framework requires each fire and rescue authority to produce a publicly available Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Within NFRS we have called this our Community Protection Plan (CPP) to make it more meaningful to the public.

The Framework states that each fire and rescue authority should ensure that the IRMP:

- Is regularly reviewed and revised and reflects up-to-date risk information and evaluation of service delivery outcomes
- Has regard to the risk analysis completed by Local and Regional Resilience Forums including those reported in external community risk registers and internal risk registers, to ensure that civil and terrorist contingencies are captured in their IRMP
- Reflects effective consultation during its development and at all review stages with representatives of all sections of the community and stakeholders
- Demonstrates how prevention, protection and response activities will be best used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities in a cost effective way
- Provides details of how fire and rescue authorities deliver their objectives and meet the needs of communities through working with partners
- Has undergone an effective Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process

Consultation on the CPP 2017-2020 (IRMP) ran from 09 November 2016 until 21 December 2016. This plan forms the year 1 action plan for delivery of the IRMP 2017/18, which has been informed by this consultation process.

In considering the short consultation period, each project within this action plan will be subject to an impact assessment and where appropriate on-going consultation will be carried out to further develop the options.

Embedded throughout this action plan is how we reform our workforce. We will build on the excellent reputation and high public satisfaction figures to further develop the culture of the Service. The first stages of this will be the implementation of a new set of Service values.

Projects

To deliver the Fire Authority's CPP 2017-2020 (IRMP), the following projects for 2017/18 are proposed:

- Project 1: Development of new SOR
- Project 2: Fire/ Emergency Cover Review
- Project 3: Development of more flexible staffing models
- Project 4: Implement new staffing model for Fire Control
- Project 5: Review/ Implement changes to the Technical Rescue Vehicle (TRV) crewing / mobilising model
- Project 6: Developing a Safe and Well Concept
- Project 7: A more accountable and transparent fire and rescue service
- Project 8: Review future governance arrangements

Project 1: Development of new Standards of Operational Response (SOR)

Owner – Area Manager Hallam

Purpose

Following wider stakeholder consultation in 2008, The Fire Authority approved NFRS' SOR, setting the initial response to life risk incidents to 8 minutes on 75% of occasions (from time of call) and a supporting response within 12 minutes (fire) and 15 minutes (road traffic collision).

These standards were based upon research data within and beyond the fire sector. When the SOR was approved, it was understood that performance against them would need to be achieved over time and to do so in both rural and urban areas would require investment and a collaborative approach to service re-engineering. Despite improvements in many areas, consistently achieving these standards across the whole county remains to some extent aspirational. The independent Operational Performance Assessment highlighted this in 2013, which stated that it gave the impression that the Service was failing even though community outcomes have improved.

Objective

There are strong dependencies between the SOR and the current response strategy that inform the resourcing requirements to achieve them. Therefore there is a need to;

- Review the current SOR in order to make them more community outcome focused
- That any new standard should take account of all of the work the Service does in order to make our communities safer
- Once a new set of standards are agreed that the Service review its response strategy in line with the new standards

Outcome

A new SOR will be developed that focuses on community safety outcomes and encapsulates not only the reactive part of the Service, but builds on the importance of prevention and protection in making Northamptonshire safer. A new set of standards will better reflect the demography and topography of the county and will better describe what can be provided to the community from its fire and rescue service within the current operating environment.

Project 2: Fire/ Emergency Cover Review

Owner - Area Manager Hallam

Purpose

This is required to capture the strategic cover model required to meet the changing pattern of community risk and taking account of the resourcing challenges (financial and human).

The Service currently has 22 fire stations, 28 fire appliances and a number of supporting specialist capabilities. The purpose of this project is to review incident data and risk at these and surrounding fire stations to determine if changes to existing fire/ emergency cover provision are required to ensure resources are utilised as effectively and efficiently to areas of risk.

The financial challenge outlined within the CPP 2017-2020 will require further transformation of service delivery models and supporting duty systems.

Objective

- To review the current fire/ emergency service infrastructure in relation to community risk and demand
- To analyse incident data across a wide range of incidents that the fire and rescue service attends, including incident type, frequency and time of day
- To ensure a sustainable, efficient and effective response infrastructure
- To identify collaborative opportunities that enable closer working to support safer communities

Outcome

NFRS will allocate resources across the county, in the most effective way possible, in order to provide an effective emergency response and supports community engagement and accessibility.

Project 3: Development of more flexible staffing models

Owner – Area Manager Ainge

Purpose

The purpose is to have the right number of people on duty, at the right time and in the right place.

The recent independent Adrian Thomas review has indicated that the current “Grey Book” duty systems employed by the fire services nationally are unfit for purpose and do not allow sufficient flexibility to allow services to match resources to risk. Whilst some work has already been done in order to re-engineer the workforce, contributing to savings of £3.9M, this has focused more on back office and officer roles, both of which have been reduced by approximately 30%, with some limited changes to the number of front line posts. Therefore further work will need to be undertaken in order to ensure that staffing models and patterns of working are as efficient as they can be, and are fit for the future.

Objective

- To review the current Wholetime Duty System (WDS) and make the necessary changes in order to ensure that it is the most efficient and effective use of personnel in managing local risk.
- NFRS to provide a sustainable and flexible resource to be able to deliver response, prevention and protection activities across the county.

Outcome

We will ensure that we are using our wholetime resources in the most effective and efficient way possible in order to deliver prevention, protection and response activities across the county.

Project 4: Implement a single joint control room

Owner – Area Manager Porter

Purpose

NFRS have been working with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service to develop a combined emergency control function. This has seen new control facilities being installed locally in Northamptonshire and in Warwickshire, that has led to a more resilient and effective service.

The money to fund the joint Northamptonshire/Warwickshire control project came directly from central government via a grant. As a condition of the “invest to save” grant both services are required to make revenue savings by working collaboratively to improve resilience and efficiency. Having implemented the enabling technology, the focus will now move to the methods of operation and the staffing model. In line with the funding bid, to maximise efficiency and resilience, both authorities will implement a preferred option for a single control room.

Objective

- To implement a preferred option for a single joint fire control serving Northamptonshire and Warwickshire
- This new model to be implemented in 2017/2018 to support financial savings of £300k with the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2017-2020

Outcome

We will ensure we develop a sustainable, efficient and effective emergency fire control that provides all of the required functions of a professional fire and rescue service emergency control for Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

Project 5: Review options and implement changes in order to achieve financial savings of circa £450K

Owners – Area Manager Ainge/ Area Manager Greenwood

Purpose

As outlined within the CPP 2017-2020, the Service needs to make efficiency savings of £1.5M during the life of this plan. In 2017/18 we need to make saving of £700K. The purpose of this project is to achieve these savings while still achieving our strategic objectives of:

- Keeping our communities safe and well
- Keeping our staff safe and well
- Making the best use of our resources

A new staffing model for Fire Control is anticipated to save £250k to £300K leaving a financial pressure of £400K-£450K. There are a number of possible options to make this required saving, examples include:

- Develop a different mobilising and crewing arrangement for the TRV based at Mereway fire station allowing the removal of 12 posts.
- Closure of 5 retained units and the removal of 5 fire appliances.
- Changing one wholetime station to day crewing only and reduce the establishment by 12 posts.

Following consideration of all options and discussion of same within budget scrutiny, the preferred option is option 1 for the following reasons.

The TRV at Mereway (Northampton) is currently mobilised as an additional resource, in addition to 2 fully equipped fire appliances, to all specialist rescues including RTCs as part of the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA).

This proposal recognises the strategic importance of the TRV as a specialist rescue capability. However many years ago all front line fire appliances were upgraded to include a full set of rescue equipment. Analysis of incident data supports that the current approach of mobilising the TRV to all RTC incidents is in the context of the current operating environment, an over-provision.

Therefore current PDAs will be reviewed in order to ensure that the TRV is mobilised to incidents where its specialist capability is required, where this is the case the attendance will be enhanced by sending additional specialist crew. The TRV will also remain available for other incidents at the request of incident commanders.

This change of use will facilitate the removal of primary crewing of the TRV, enabling the removal of 12 firefighter posts from the establishment to achieve the required MTFP efficiency saving. Vacant establishment posts will be removed so no redundancies are required.

Objective

- To review and amend the PDAs for the TRV to ensure an efficient and effective emergency response.
- To implement alternative crewing/ mobilising models for the TRV.

Outcome

In achieving the financial savings of £700K in 2017/2018, we believe this option presents the least risk to the public and firefighters assist will enable greater targeting of the use of the TRV to support the more technically challenging incidents.

Project 6: Develop a safe and well concept

Owner – Area Manager Ainge

Purpose

Since the introduction of the Fire Services Act in 2004, fire and rescue services have shifted their focus from being a 'responsive' service to a more 'preventative' one. This has resulted in an overall reduction in fatalities, casualties and incidents attended, making our communities much safer.

The purpose of this project is to expand the current Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) scheme to introduce a Safe and Well concept.

Objectives

- Establish the benefits of a Safe and Well visit through the use of trials
- Develop a partnership approach in targeting those most vulnerable
- Analyse partnership data to better target safe and well visits
- Review/ implement the HFSC visit to include safe and well elements

Outcome

By building on the success of the HFSC scheme in preventing incidents from occurring, the expansion to include Safe and Well visits utilises the Service's experience and reputation by supporting people to live safely within their homes. Due to increasing demographic and financial pressures on the health and social care system, the Service is committed to support vulnerable members of the community through this project.

Project 7: A more accountable and transparent Fire and Rescue Service

Owner – Deputy Chief Fire Officer Harding

Purpose

Being more accountable and transparent to the communities of Northamptonshire and our staff enables the Service to better understand and respond to their changing needs, determining how we respond to the challenges we face.

Embedded throughout this action plan is how we reform our workforce. We will build on the excellent reputation and high public satisfaction figures to further develop our workforce. The first stages of this will be the implementation of a new set of service values.

The Home Office will develop a new inspection regime for fire and rescue services during 2017/18 for full implementation in April 2018. NFRS will need to have appropriate structures and processes in place to support this regime.

Objectives

- Review/ implement a new website, which provides easy access to Service information, including easily understandable performance information
- Make better use of social media
- To continually engage with stakeholders regarding projects throughout the year, depending on the impact and those affected
- Implement a new set of service values for all staff
- Prepare the organisation for a new inspection regime
- Continually review the culture of our organisation to ensure we are the role models and community advocates we are expected to be

Outcome

We are committed to ensure we work with communities and our staff to develop and implement our plans. This project builds on our current consultation process by improving access to organisational and operational information, enabling greater accountability and transparency in your fire and rescue service. We will respond to your feedback to ensure we are accountable to the communities that we serve.

Project 8: Future Governance Arrangements.

Owner – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) / Chief Fire Officer Dovey

Purpose

To ensure that the fire and rescue service are engaged and able to contribute effectively to the governance debate and any business case for change led by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), in accordance with legislation.

Objectives

To influence and contribute to the OPCC led business case on the preferred future governance option for NFRS, in taking forward a preferred option, the following range of options will have been considered in an options appraisal:

- Option 1 - Governance remains the same, under Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) as Fire Authority
- Option 2 - Police and Crime Commissioner joins the NCC Fire Authority
- Option 3 - The Fire Authority comes under the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Option 4 - A single governance model under the Police and Crime Commissioner which will involve a single organisation

Outcome

If there is a decision to move towards a change in governance, a full business case will be drawn up and submitted. If this is the case then consultation is likely to be in Spring 2017.