

Annual Report

Statement of Assurance

2019/20



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Fire & Rescue Service

Creating Safer Communities



www.notts-fire.gov.uk

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Introduction

Welcome to our Statement of Assurance for 2019/20.

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England requires us to report each year on our progress against our Strategic Plan. We do this through our Annual Statement of Assurance, which provides the public and other stakeholders with information about our performance over the last 12 months.

On 1st April 2019, following a period of public consultation, we launched our Strategic Plan 2019-22, which outlines how we will deliver on our vision of creating safer communities.

During Year One of this plan we have delivered some significant strategic projects, including:

- Setting up a Joint Fire Control in collaboration with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Delivering the final phase of our SharePoint Strategy, making it easier for teams to manage and share information.
- Embedding National Operational Guidance within our operational ways of working and training.
- Signing off plans for a new Joint Headquarters with Nottinghamshire Police and obtaining planning consent for the building work.

At the same time, we have maintained our focus on preventing incidents, protecting and responding to you. We have:

- substantially increased the number of Safe and Well visits for our more vulnerable residents
- expanded our capacity to undertake fire safety inspections
- improved the availability of on-call appliances
- achieved our target average attendance time in responding to emergencies

In June 2019, we received feedback from HMICFRS following our first full inspection in February 2019. Whilst the inspectors rated our Protection work and response to national risks as Good, they also identified areas for improvement within all three pillars of the inspection framework. We have a detailed action plan in place and are already making good progress in addressing the issues raised.

Personally, and on behalf of the Fire Authority, we would like to thank all our staff and our partners for their hard work in the last 12 months. It is this continued collective approach that enables us to achieve our vision of creating safer communities.

You can read more about the service we have provided and our achievements over the last 12 months in this Statement of Assurance and by following the links to other published documents on our website and the Fire Authority web pages that are contained within.

‘Fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance’.



Department for
Communities and
Local Government



Incident numbers fell to **9,658** from **11,235** in 2018/19.

14%



Safe and Well Visits increased to **7,752** from **4,219** in 2018/19.

84%



Joint Headquarters project was approved and started in 2019/20.



Joint Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire Fire Control project completed.



Accidents in the workplace fell to **41** from **52** in 2018/19.

21%



Fitness Tests were passed by **99.5%** of our operational staff compared to 98.9% in 2018/19.



Availability of On-Call Appliances increased to an average **86%** from **84%** in 2018/19.

2%



False alarms reduced to **3,975** from **4,475** in 2018/19.

11%



Tri-service Station at Hucknall was completed and opened.



'Sit-Up Service' provided night-time shelter for homeless people during freezing temperatures.

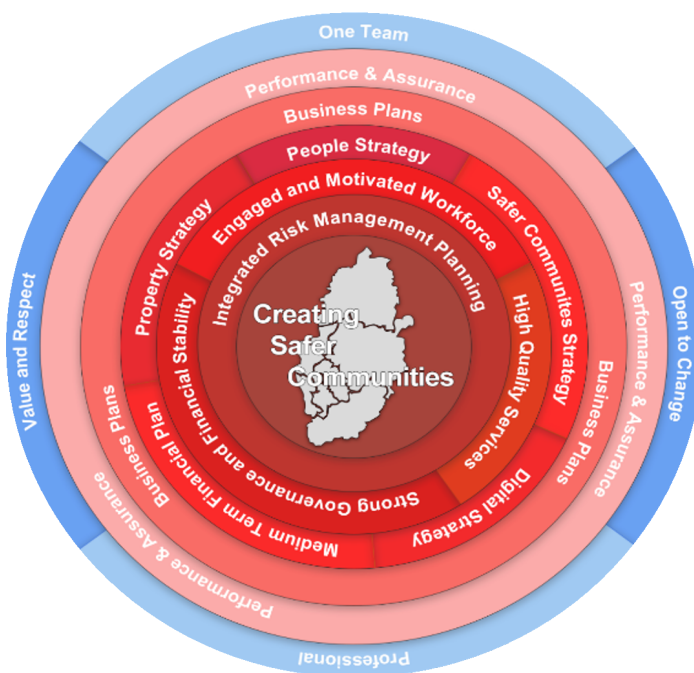
**35
People**



We made **£600k of savings** during 2019/20.



Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has a vision of *creating safer communities*, which is at the heart of everything we do. It shapes our strategic plan and objectives and is underpinned by our core values.



Each year we define an annual Action Plan which identifies the strategic actions we will focus on in support of our Strategic Plan. In this first year of the 2019-22 Strategic Plan we identified 10 Strategic Actions. Of these, three are major projects which will take two or more years to complete.

In addition to the Strategic Action Plan, every department has an annual business plan, which sets out the priorities and objectives for their teams for the year. These plans focus on delivering and continuously improving the services we provide to our communities.



Joint Headquarters Collaboration Programme. This is the largest collaboration project to date between Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and Nottinghamshire Police. NFRS will move from Bestwood Lodge to a new joint headquarters at the current Nottinghamshire Police headquarters at Sherwood Lodge. During 2019-20 we approved the building plans, obtained planning consent and appointed a contractor. This is a three-year Strategic Action which is on track for completion in 2022.



Implement Joint Fire Control with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. This project saw Nottinghamshire Fire Control move to the existing Derbyshire Fire Control at Ascot Drive Fire Station in Derby. The move is designed to improve collaboration and understanding between our services whilst delivering efficiency and financial savings going forward. The new Joint Fire Control went live in July 2019. This project is now complete.



Consider the outcomes and develop a plan for implementation of the Equipment Review. In order to ensure that our equipment and resources are kept up to date and fit for purpose, we conducted a review to ensure that we can respond to incidents as effectively and efficiently as possible. This project is complete.

Respond to the outcomes of HMICFRS inspection. Following our inspection in February 2019, we are working hard to deliver our action plan to address the areas identified as requiring improvement. Significant progress has been made across all the areas for improvement. Eight have been fully completed with the remainder due to be finished by the end of 2021.

Implement the Performance Management Framework (PMF). To improve how we monitor and evaluate our productivity and effectiveness we are developing and implementing the PMF. We have delivered a new Professional Development Review (PDR) process for staff and improvements to our performance reporting and monitoring. This is a two-year Strategic Action and is on track for completion in March 2021.



Embed National Operational Guidance products. National Operational Guidance (NOG) is designed to standardise operational ways of working for Fire and Rescue services nationwide. This Strategic Action is complete, with guidance and training packages now in use by operational crews across the Service to help them to maintain their operational competencies.

Implement the Emergency Services Network (ESN) in line with the National Plan. The ESN is a communication network which will allow all emergency services across the country to communicate more effectively with each other at incidents. This is a three-year Strategic Action and is on track for completion in 2022.



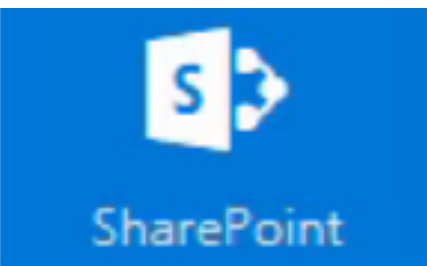
Review and test Service-wide Business Continuity arrangements.

During 2019-20 we reviewed our business continuity arrangements to ensure that our critical activities can be maintained in the event of any business disruption. The Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) continues to provide assurance to the Fire Authority's stakeholders that arrangements are in place to meet critical functions. This Strategic Action is now complete.

Commence alignment of all information management processes to ISO27001 (Cyber security). ISO27001 is the standard created by the

International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) which deals with Information Security Management. It is a way of making sure that we are managing information security risks effectively. This is a two-year Strategic Action, which is on track for completion in 2021.

Complete the SharePoint Strategy and Delivery Programme. An electronic document management system has been delivered to support the organisation and its people by ensuring that information is available through resilient and secure means, while providing improved collaborative working between teams. This Strategic Action is now complete.



Preventing Incidents and Protecting You



Emollient creams

Did you know...

That skin creams containing paraffin based products can be easily ignited with a naked flame or a cigarette when in contact with clothing and dressings?

This is why you should always keep away from fire when using paraffin based products, including Vaseline Paraffin, White Soft Paraffin plus 50% Liquid Paraffin or emulsifying ointment.

To use these creams safely, follow our tips:

- ✓ Never smoke or use naked flames, or be near to someone who is smoking whilst these products are in contact with clothing, bedding, dressings or bandages etc.
- ✓ Ensure that clothes and bedding are changed regularly when using these products, as the paraffin soaks into the fabric, which can be a potential fire hazard.



Candle safety

Did you know...

That you should always use candles, divas and tea lights in a proper secure holder?

This is because naked flames which are not in protective holders can set fire to other items easily.

“Make sure to tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you smoke whilst using these products, or are treating someone who smokes these creams while they smoke.”

- ✓ Never have a naked flame within the reach of children or pets.
- ✓ Keep the flame at a safe distance from curtains, furniture, long hair, and clothing, including hair etc.
- ✓ Always extinguish candles when going to bed or leaving the room.
- ✓ If you are using a candle, tea light or glow plug, use a proper holder.

Prevention

In 2019-20

- We increased the number of Safe and Well visits by 84%. We conducted 7752 visits, compared to 4219 in 2018-19.
- 53% of our visits were delivered to people over 65 and 33% were delivered to people who considered themselves to have a disability.
- We increased the number of specialist smoke detectors we installed for people with hearing impairments by 126% to 1157, compared to 511 in 2018-19.

We conducted:

- 524 community safety initiatives and school visits.
- 65 road safety events.
- 14 water safety initiatives.



If you think you or someone you know is at risk from a fire in the home, please contact us on 0115 838 8100



Creating Safer Communities

It has been a busy year for us in Prevention.

In 2019-20 we launched our 'Safer Communities Strategy'. This sets out our Prevention priorities and ensures that our activities and resources are aligned to our Strategic Plan and target areas of highest risk.

Through our Community Safety Area Prevention Plans we have delivered prevention activities targeting specific risks within our local communities.

We have also aligned our activities to themes and initiatives which are happening nationally. These include road and water safety, and cooking in the home.

We have improved the way we evaluate our prevention activities, as part of our continuous improvement approach, to ensure they are delivering the expected benefits.

The Fire-setters programme continues to provide valuable interventions. It provides education for young people who are referred to us because they have shown an interest in setting or playing with fire.

In 2019-20 we made 122 visits to children between 3 and 17 years of age in Nottinghamshire.

Our joint Young Cadets Scheme continues to provide a programme for young people with an interest in the Fire and Rescue Service and Police. We currently have 16 cadets on the two-year pilot course.

In the last year we have made improvements to the way we support our deaf community. We have enrolled 2 of our staff on British Sign Language courses, created a web page on fire safety for British Sign language users and collaborated with Derbyshire FRS on a joint non-emergency SMS number for deaf service users. The Service also delivered an open day for the deaf community to raise awareness of what the Service does and of fire safety.



We continue to work closely with a wide range of partners and community organisations to identify and keep safe those who are most at risk.

Our education team work alongside School early intervention officers to increase awareness of road and water safety.

This is alongside the work we do as part of the Nottinghamshire Road Safety Partnership and Water Safety Partnership for Nottinghamshire.

Following the successful introduction of an Occupational Therapist in 2017, we have committed to the continuation of this post for the next three years. This strengthens the relationship and work carried out between NFRS and our partners at Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

2019-20 has seen further targeted intervention through our work with the 'Hoarders' Panels. The partnership of District and City Councils means that data can be shared appropriately between relevant agencies, improving the way we target those who are most at risk.



FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

1 Identify fire hazards

Identify:

Sources of ignition
Sources of fuel
Sources of oxygen

2 Identify people at risk

Identify:

People in and around premises
People especially at risk

3 Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from

- Evaluate the risk of a fire occurring
- Evaluate the risk to people from fire
- Remove or reduce fire hazards
- Remove or reduce the risks to people
 - Detection and warning
 - Fire-fighting
 - Escape routes
 - Lighting

Protection

In 2019-20 the team completed:

- 1045 fire safety audits
- 743 building consultations
- 460 specific inspections
- 316 Licencing consultations
- 12 prohibition notices
- 31 enforcement (official) notices
- 252 follow-up inspections (following notice of deficiency)

In 2019-20 we attended:

- 10% fewer non-domestic false alarms than in 2018-19
- 5% fewer lift rescues than in 2018-19

We have continued to focus our resources on the higher risk commercial premises through our risk-based inspection programme. Our Protection team has continued to fulfil its statutory duties aligned to the building control process and those set out within the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). Enforcement officers have continued to regulate the FSO on the worst offending, non-compliant premises.



In our first inspection, HMICFRS said we are good at protecting the public through fire regulation.

Work has continued with other regulators to improve fire safety standards across the county in non-domestic premises. These regulators include Building Control, Environmental Health, Health and Safety Executive, Nottinghamshire Police and other premises specific agencies such as Care Quality Commission, Ofsted and the Food Standards Agency.

As part of our statutory duties to support businesses our Business Education Advocate engages with local businesses to provide guidance, support and advice on fire safety matters.

We have continued to provide assured advice to companies who have business premises within more than one Fire and Rescue service catchment area through the Primary Authority Partnership.

We have participated in the building consultation processes of major construction projects across Nottinghamshire. These include the redevelopment of the Broadmarsh Shopping Centre in the city and the Amazon distribution centre. We have also been involved in consultations at the design stage of the HS2 rail project, which is expected to pass through parts of the county.

Throughout 2019-20, we have been working hard to increase our capacity to inspect local non-domestic properties for compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO).

Our Protection team has developed a fire auditors' qualification aligned to the National Fire Chiefs Council competency framework. They have delivered this to all supervisory managers who will be warranted to inspect premises using powers afforded by the legislation upon completion of the award. This will allow Business Safety Checks to be conducted utilising operational crews, who will inspect low risk premises regulated by the FSO.

The Service continues to work closely with National Fire Chiefs Council Building Safety Team following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017.

Since August 2019, we have been working to make our Multi-Occupancy Residential Buildings safer as part of a partnership that includes the City and County Councils and other key stakeholders.

We have continued to work closely with local authority safer housing teams and Building Control to improve the standards of several high-risk premises within the Nottingham City Council boundary.

We have worked collaboratively with Nottingham City Homes (NCH), providing advice and guidance on the retro fitting of sprinkler systems. These are now being fitted in all Nottingham City Homes' high-rise blocks to help ensure the safety of their residents.

We will continue to monitor the progress of the public enquiry, in preparation for the actioning of any recommendations that may arise, once the enquiry has been concluded.



Responding to You



Response

In 2019/20

- We attended 9,658 emergency incidents, a significant reduction of 14% on 2018/19.
- We rescued 1,341 people from buildings, vehicles, water, confined spaces and height.
- There were 26% fewer fires than in 2018/19.
- We attended 559 road traffic collisions, a slight increase of 3% on 2018/19.
- We responded to 2,032 Special Service Calls, which is a slight increase 0.3% on 2018/19. Such calls include assisting the Ambulance Service and responding to flooding.
- Our on-call fire appliances were available on average 85.85% of the time, exceeding our target of 85%



National Resilience

In addition to the emergencies we respond to within Nottinghamshire, at times of need we may also be called upon to help communities in other parts of the country as part of our 'national resilience' responsibilities. This aspect of our work was rated as Good by HMICFRS inspectors.

In 2019-20, NFRS attended a variety of incidents as part of this commitment. Notable examples were the Whaley Bridge dam wall collapse in August and the extensive flooding in Lincolnshire during 2019.

Equipment

As we attend a wide range of emergencies, and need to keep our firefighters safe, it is vital that we have the right equipment to professionally respond. During 2019/20 we have replaced some of our existing equipment.

- Our operational crews are now wearing new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The new 'firekit' replaces the previous PPE which had been in service for 10 years. Working with other services and following on from research carried out by Kent Fire and Rescue Service, we purchased the new kit through the National Procurement Framework saving the organisation time and valuable resources.
- New digital radios have increased clarity during communication at incidents, meaning important messages can be passed more effectively.
- In January we launched our new drone in a joint venture with Nottinghamshire Police. In the first three months, it has been used at 12 incidents, providing incident commanders with a clearer picture of the situation, helping them to make more detailed decisions and keep the public and firefighters safe.
- A new remote dual-thermal imaging camera is now in operation which can be operated from the Aerial Ladder Platform. This gives us the capability of assessing incidents at height without putting personnel at unnecessary risk.

Operational staffing

Crews at Ashfield and Retford have completed their first full year of working the new day-shift crewing model.

We have strengthened our On-Call workforce through the recruitment of 17 new trainees. Over a third of our operational staff are On-Call firefighters and devote time to keeping our communities safe. It is important that we do all we can to support and develop this important part of our fire cover provision.

Through the course of our Strategic Plan 2019-22, it is our aim to improve the availability of our On-Call appliances to an average of 85%, with no station falling below 70%. **In 2019-20 the average availability of On-Call appliances was 85.85%.**

Operational Training

Our crews train extensively to maintain their competency and capability in order to carry out their roles effectively and safely. We provide a blended learning approach combining:

- A full programme of training activity at our Service Development Centre.
- A range of modules delivered through our e-learning platform, which ensures that technical knowledge and guidance is readily available and accessible to all employees.
- A programme of training exercises, throughout the year, which helps to maintain our operational preparedness for the wide range of emergency incidents which we may encounter. In 2019-20 our crews participated in 24 exercises; eight of these involved a multi-agency approach and used resources from neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services. This preparation is vital to ensure that in the event of an incident, responders from all agencies can work together effectively.
- Incident Command training to support and develop current and future Incident Commanders. This involves exposing them to pressure situations in a controlled, safe environment. We have maintained our 'Centre of Excellence' status for XVR Incident Command simulation and also gained Skills for Justice Direct Claims accreditation.

Operational Preparedness

During 2019-20 our operational crews visited 206 sites across the county to collect information about the risks which may be encountered there during an incident. This is to assist us in ensuring that our response is as safe as possible for our crews and the public.

The Service has reviewed and updated training and guidance relating to high-rise building fires and has reviewed the risk information that is held about them.

National Operational Guidance (NOG) informs ways of working for Fire and Rescue Services nationally. We continued to support the joint East Midlands team through 2019-20 with the provision of both a Station Manager and a Watch Manager working full time to design and develop shared training packages for use across the region.

The Grenfell tragedy continues to influence the Service's operational ways of working and progress is monitored through the Service's Performance Board to ensure that recommendations in Phase 1 of the public inquiry are implemented in accordance with the timescales that have been set.

Fire Investigation

In 2019-20 specialist fire investigators investigated 87 serious fires across the county. Our fire investigators work alongside the police and forensic experts to collect and examine evidence and determine the likely origin and cause of the fire. We provide expert opinion to the coroner, police and insurance companies, as well as advising the property owners on future fire safety measures.

Our team has strengthened ties with Nottingham Trent University's Forensic Science department in the last year. The Crime Scene House at NTU's Clifton Campus will be utilised by NFRS during the summer months, providing further forensic awareness to staff.

As part of our continuing support of this partnership we provide input on the Forensic Science degree course syllabus.

We have also assisted the University to establish a test burn facility, which is expected to be in use towards the summer of 2020.



Looking After Our People



People

In 2019-20

We employed 821 people compared to 886 in 2018/19, consisting of:

674 staff in operational roles compared to 742 in 2018/19.

147 staff in support roles compared to 144 in 2018/19.

We recruited:

8 Wholetime firefighter apprentices

17 On-Call firefighter trainees

26 Support staff

In 2019-20:

41 accidents were reported in the workplace, compared with 52 in 2018-19, **a reduction of 21%.**

70 near misses were reported compared to 72 in 2018-19.

99.5% of operational staff passed the annual fitness test, compared to 98.9 in 2018-19.

Figures take into account a reduction in Wholetime posts in September 2019 due to a change in crewing models at two fire stations and the relocation of Fire Control to Derbyshire FRS.

Our Values:



Being open to change and understanding the need to improve - This means we open ourselves up to new ideas and become a more sustainable and stable organisation, ready for the future.



Being professional in all that we do by being the best we can be - This is done by behaving with integrity and taking personal responsibility for our behaviour and decisions.



Valuing and respecting others - By treating our staff, our community and our service users with respect and consideration, we become a more customer-focused and inclusive organisation.



Working as one team to create safer communities.

We recognise that we are not representative in terms of the number of women, LGBT+ and Black and Minority Ethnic employees we employ, particularly in operational roles.

We are committed to addressing this, running a campaign of positive action in support of our recruitment of new firefighters. In 2019-20, of the eight new wholetime firefighters who commenced their training, two were from Black, Asian or Minority ethnic backgrounds, and two were female. We are building on our experiences of the 2018 campaign, to put further positive action plans in place for the upcoming recruitment.

We have continued to maintain a strong commitment to inclusion and equality this year.

We continue to support LGBT+ service users and staff. We were proud sponsors at both Worksop and Nottingham Pride, and visibly supported International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia.

We continue to work with partners across Nottinghamshire and the Fire sector. We were part of a multi-agency partnership conference in 2019 on LGBT Mental Health and Wellbeing.

We were also part of a multi-agency disability history conference on role models and leadership. At this event members of Pulp Friction (the social enterprise working with individuals with learning disabilities) spoke about their experiences, and the skills they have gained, working within our service headquarters canteen.

We have delivered a range of training packages to raise awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the workforce during the year.

This training links to our core values and promotes our expectations of the way that employees conduct themselves, and engage with the county's diverse communities.

In 2019-20

242 e-learning packages were completed.

42 new starters took part in 'An Introduction to Equality' training, as part of their initial development.

154 staff attended the 'Diversity in Employment and working with vulnerable people' training course.

57 managers undertook 'Diversity for managers' e-learning.

During 2019-20, as part of the implementation of our performance management framework, we have redeveloped our Professional Development Review process and launched a new Behavioural Framework. The new approach puts emphasis on ensuring that every member of staff has clear objectives, understands what is expected of them and can see clearly how their actions contribute to the overall delivery of our Strategic Plan.



In 2019 we developed our Wellbeing Strategy with a focus on developing a culture of sustainable wellbeing for everyone.

The strategy identifies four core aspects: Mental Wellness, Communication, Fitness for Role and Healthy Lifestyle.

During 2019-20 there has been a major focus on mental health and wellness, led by the Occupational Health team. We have:

- hosted campaign days such as Time to Talk and open drop-in sessions, including mental health awareness on a Service-wide 'tour'
- delivered sessions on wellbeing, including mental health and mindfulness at the 2019 spring conference
- developed training packages for staff and managers on topics including stress and mental health awareness

We have refreshed and improved the availability of information for staff, including the production of an **'enhance your wellbeing'** brochure which details all of the support available.

The extension of the normal retirement age will bring challenges aligned to longer working life. We are increasing the support available to help staff maintain good health and fitness throughout their careers:

- Greater emphasis is being given to improving strength and conditioning to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries.
- We provide bespoke advice for individuals and teams and access to in-house physiotherapy.
- Our station Physical Training Instructors maintain their competencies through regular e-learning updates in order to provide fitness support to our operational staff.
- All our staff are encouraged to participate in a range of fitness activities, which are delivered by the occupational health team, whether remotely, from home or within the workplace.



Delivering an Efficient Service



Internal governance

During 2019-20, we have made improvements to our internal governance and assurance systems.

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority, which is often referred to as the Combined Fire Authority, is responsible for ensuring the Service has the people, equipment and training needed to carry out our duties in relation to fire prevention, fire safety, firefighting and rescue, road traffic collision extrication and rescue and other emergency rescue activities e.g. responding to flooding or terrorism.

The full Combined Fire Authority consists of 12 members, made up of elected councillors from Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. There are six committees that report to the Fire Authority. These are:

- Appointments
- Community Safety
- Finance and Resources
- Human Resources
- Personnel
- Policy and Strategy

Collectively, these committees and the authority as a whole make decisions on key matters such as policy, strategy and budget.

Meetings of the Fire Authority and its committees are open to the public. Further information can be found on the City Council's website. (needs link)

Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)

Under the direction of the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), the Strategic Leadership Team is responsible for implementing the strategy and policy decisions taken by the Combined Fire Authority. The team meets weekly to maintain collective understanding of priorities, discuss emerging issues and determine if further formal reports and/or business cases are required to be presented for consideration.

Programme and Performance Board

The Programme and Performance Board is a monthly meeting of the SLT, chaired by the CFO, which focuses on the progress being made against the strategic objectives set by the Fire Authority. It scrutinises performance reports from all areas of the Service and oversees significant corporate projects.

Operational Learning Board

An Operational Learning Board has been created to ensure that the Service can effectively learn from the operational incidents and exercises that are attended. The Board also considers learning that has come both locally and nationally from other Fire and Rescue Services to ensure an efficient and effective operational response.

Service Delivery Evaluation and Assurance Group

This new group meets quarterly to oversee the performance of our prevention, protection and response teams. Risk and performance highlights are identified, with the aim of addressing any areas of concern and celebrating and learning from good performance.

Information Governance & Cyber Security

The Information Governance team supports Freedom of Information and transparency of NFRS as a publicly funded service, whilst ensuring that Data Protection responsibilities are maintained. NFRS continues to train all employees in data protection responsibilities.

Cyber-attacks are a constant threat to organisations, and NFRS is no different. In 2019 our 'Cyber Essentials Plus' certification was revalidated. We continue to monitor and update our practices to ensure that we are well placed to deal with current and future risks appropriately. **In 2019-20 we have thwarted 154,270 total threats, including spam, malware and viruses.**

Business Continuity Management

We updated our business continuity plans at corporate and departmental levels, identifying the actions which would be needed in the event of business disruption. This process was completed early in 2020. In March, the COVID-19 pandemic provided a major test for those plans, which proved to be robust enough to ensure that we have been able to continue to deliver critical activities to our communities in Nottinghamshire and support our partners in other frontline services.

Financial Performance

Under the Local Government Act 1999, fire and rescue authorities are responsible for ensuring that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

NFRS provides financial assurance through the publication of an [Annual Statement of Accounts](#). This is a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the accounts are prepared following the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. The financial statements are subject to review by independent auditors as directed by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

The Service's appointed external auditor is Ernst Young LLP. The auditors are responsible for two key areas:

1. *Financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement)*: Providing an opinion on our accounts; and
2. *Use of resources*: Concluding on the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in our use of resources (the value for money conclusion).

Internal Audit forms part of the wider system of internal control which deals entirely with the Authority's exposure to financial, and to some extent non-financial risk.

The Service's internal audit for 2019-20 was conducted by Nottinghamshire County Council and reported to the Finance and Resources Committee of the Authority, enabling Members to see the work of internal audit and the contribution that they make to the overall system of internal control.

The 2019/20 budget was set at £42.696m. This was set knowing that £1.24m would be required from reserves to support the budget. The Service worked hard to make £600k of savings during the year. Final expenditure was £42.096m, requiring a total of £605k to be used from reserves. Capital expenditure for the financial year was £1.843m, mostly on operational personal protective equipment (£817k) and finishing the new station at Hucknall (£403k).

The Service held total reserves of £9.934m at 31 March 2020.

A balanced budget of £45.165m has been set for 2020/21, meaning that the use of general fund reserves should not be required.

[Corporate Governance](#)

[Code of](#)

[The Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#)

Our Collaboration Journey so far...



Since it became a statutory duty we have been proactive in seeking opportunities for collaboration which can improve efficiency and operational effectiveness.

In 2019-20 we have completed a variety of projects in collaboration with other emergency services.

In addition to the projects referenced elsewhere within this document such as Joint Headquarters, Tri-Emergency Services Hub at Hucknall and the drone resource, other significant examples include:

West Bridgford - building works have been completed for the Fire Station to become a shared Fire and Police Station. Alterations work was carried out to enable the Police to move in and share the site in April.

Highfields Fire Station has been adapted to enable the Police to use spare capacity for some of their training teams. The Police driving school now operates from the site and first aid training is also carried out at the station.

Hazardous Materials & Environmental Protection Unit (HMEPU) - as part of the continued drive towards collaboration and value for money, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) have agreed to share the HMEPU appliance resource to deliver a Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) and Environmental Protection function at incidents that require it.

Command Support Unit (CSU) - we have need for two CSU's due to our National Resilience commitments. In order to share costs, we entered into an agreement with DFRS where a second vehicle is shared. Our dedicated CSU has received an upgrade this year improving its capabilities.

Fuel Sharing - joint procurement and drawing of bunkered fuel has been expanded giving greater access to Police officers around the county.

Building Improvements

Works have been carried out at Ashfield, Worksop and Stockhill fire stations whilst improvements have also been made to Mansfield's Fire Service Museum.

Fleet Maintenance contract

We have appointed a new high-performing contractor to maintain our fleet of vehicles. This was a complex procurement and is already delivering benefits in time, professionalism, quality of work and cost.

HMIFRS Action Plan

At the time of publication, we have already completed all of the actions in eight areas for improvement, including: improvements to our operational training programmes, changes in the way we capture and share risk information, strategies for prevention and wellbeing, development and testing business continuity plans.

Substantial progress has been made on 12 other actions, which will be delivered by October. The remaining actions will be completed by the end of 2020-21.

Coronavirus Pandemic

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic we have adopted new ways of working to ensure that we are able to:

- Maintain an appropriate operational response to protect our communities.
- Continue to support high risk vulnerable persons with targeted prevention and protection activities.
- Continue to deliver effective fire protection activities in business premises, particularly as businesses develop new working procedures to manage coronavirus.
- Support our partners in the delivery of wider community activities, where we have the necessary skills and resources.

We are confident that we have the resilience to continue to deliver our vision of creating safer communities.

Future Improvement

The Fire Authority has signed off our Year 2 Strategic Action Plan This includes the four continuing strategic actions from Year 1.

- Joint Headquarters Collaboration Programme.
- Implementation of Emergency Services Network.
- Completion of the Performance Management Framework.
- Aligning information management processes to ISO27001.

It also includes a range of new actions around the themes of: Responding to You, Preventing Incidents and Protecting You, Delivering an Efficient Service and Looking after our People.

Fire Cover Review 2021

In 2021, we will carry out a comprehensive risk analysis of our county. This data will help us ensure that we are allocating our resources to the foreseeable risks within our communities and feed into the development of our next Strategic Plan.

Read our full HMICFRS inspection report.



The Combined Fire Authority(CFA) functions within the clearly defined statutory and policy framework. The key documents setting this out are:

Assurance Declaration

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority is satisfied that it has met Government expectations and responsibilities expected of Fire and Rescue Services with regard to the National Framework. It is satisfied that it has shown due regard for public money and that it was properly accounted for and used efficiently and effectively. It has adhered to the commitments set out in the IRMP for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a large loop and a long horizontal stroke.

Councillor Michael Payne

Chair of the Fire Authority