

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Service**
Creating the Safest Community



STRATEGY 2025



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FOREWORD



Councillor Tony Taylor
*Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue
Authority Chair*

As the Chair of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority, it is an honour to be introducing our 2025 Strategy. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service are committed and work hard to deliver our vision of 'Creating the Safest Community' which is outlined in this strategy.

We are fortunate to have highly dedicated, professional and well-trained employees whose clear motivation is the protection and safety of our communities across Tyne and Wear. As a high performing fire and rescue service, rated by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as Good in all three areas inspected, we want to continually improve our service to you, and we are committed to implementing changes that will help us to achieve this goal.



Chris Lowther QFSM
*Chief Fire Officer
and Chief Executive*

The Fire and Rescue Service has faced many challenges in recent years and has faced significant change across the sector. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has tested all areas of the Service. I believe we have met these challenges with resilience, professionalism, and leadership.

Our new longer term Strategy sets out our commitment to the continued delivery of a first class fire and rescue service and our intention of how we will continue to improve, whatever the challenge. Our clear vision and strategic priorities set direction for the Service, help us to measure performance, and ensure we deliver value for money to the public.

The Strategy has been developed using intelligence, insight, and an understanding of current and future risks, both in Tyne and Wear and nationally. We will continue to be adaptable and innovative to address the changing needs we face, and work with our valued partners and the community, to achieve our vision and deliver a Service we are proud of.

PURPOSE OF OUR STRATEGY

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Strategy 2025 explains how we intend to continue to deliver high quality services that meet the needs of our communities now and in the future. It presents our clear vision, strategic goals, and priorities for a five year period.

This Strategy document aims to modernise our approach to strategic planning, having previously presented large and detailed documents combining strategy, corporate plan, Integrated Risk Management Plan, and performance reporting.

This new Strategy also represents a shift in how we present all of our corporate documentation: our goal is to produce simple, understandable information, which is suitable and interesting for the audience, making better use of technology and graphics. This also reflects a broader shift in strategic planning in the Service – incorporating the new approach to Programme and Project Management, aligning the new TWFRS 2025 Transformation Programme with strategic planning, ensuring a golden thread runs through all plans, improving corporate governance and benefits realisation of all we do.

This Strategy sets out our priorities to improve and also explains how we will strengthen our Service, by being responsive to change and through exploring new and innovative ways of working we will continue to deliver a first class service to the people of Tyne and Wear.

The Service has evolved and dealt with significant challenges over recent years, including those brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic, we will continue to adapt and improve as a Service ensuring we always respond promptly, with the right people, skills and equipment to deal with any incident effectively.



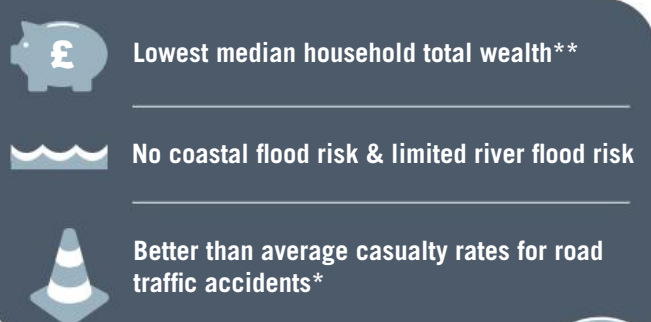
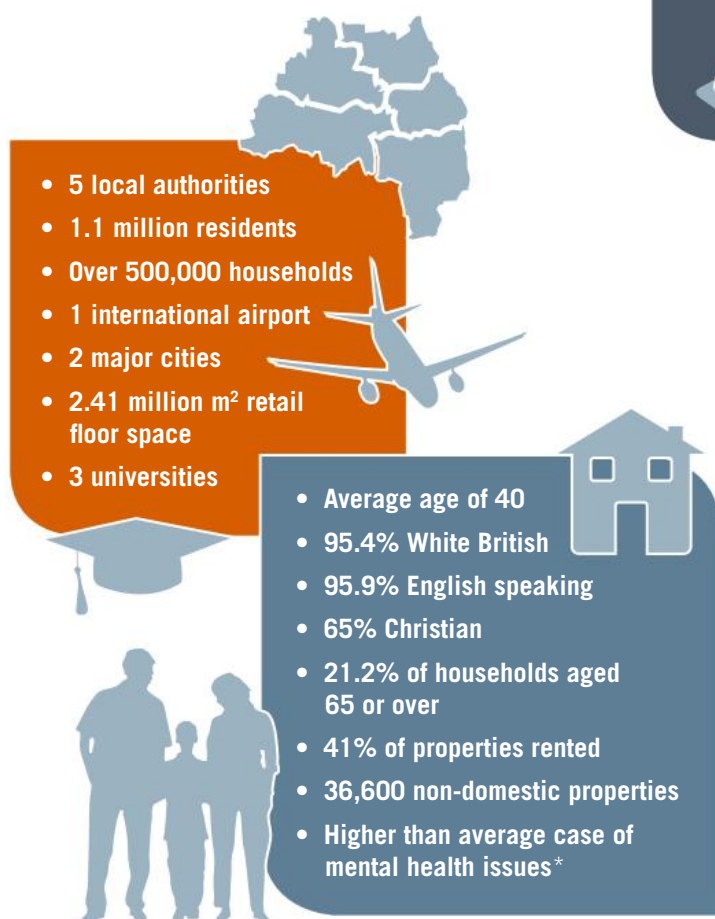
ABOUT US

Tyne and Wear consists of the five local authority areas of Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland. It borders Northumberland County to the North and Durham County to the South.

It is a densely populated metropolitan area with 1.1 million residents covering 538km². Whilst only representing 6% of the region's land, it is home to 43% of the region's population with over 500,000 households.

The population is growing, ageing and becoming more diverse, presenting further challenges for service provision.

Further information about the demographic makeup of the community is detailed in the **Community Risk Profile**.



North East

- Highest rate of unemployment *
- Highest rate of hospital admissions due to alcohol*
- Higher than average mortality rates from alcohol*
- 16% of adults smoke*
- Highest rate of mortality attributable to smoking*
- Highest number of hospital admissions due to drug use (per 100,000 population)*
- Highest levels of obesity*
- Higher than average levels of antisocial behaviour*

* England **Great Britain

All sources:
CRP 2020/23 references
English indices of deprivation 2019

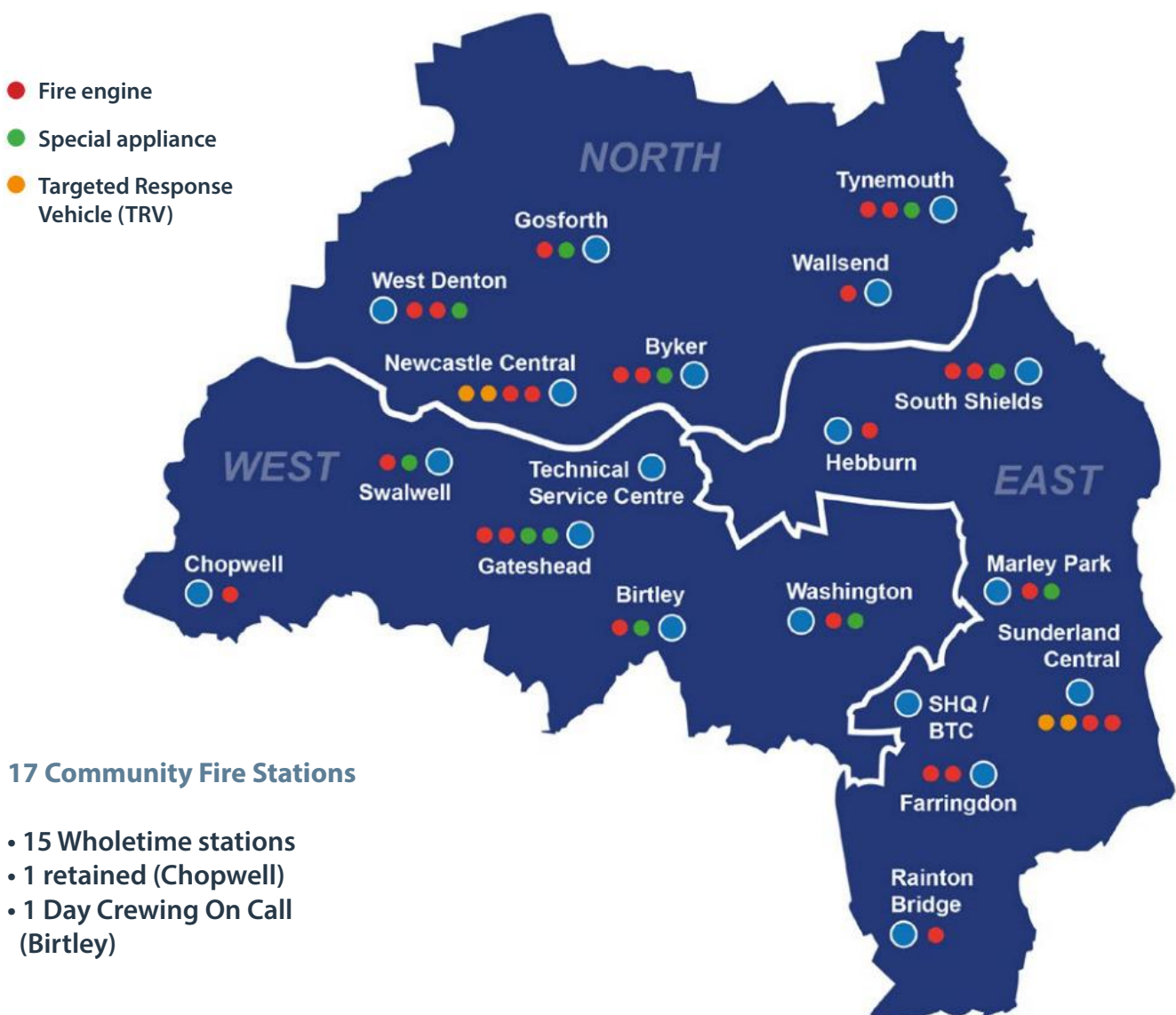
Our Area

The Service operates from 17 community fire stations across Tyne and Wear, staffed in a number of different ways to reflect local risks and demands.

Our stations, staff and appliances are strategically placed across Tyne and Wear to ensure efficient and effective response to fires and other emergencies. Appliances work across station areas and can be mobilised whilst away from their home station.

We also have robust arrangements with neighbouring services to enable additional support during major emergencies.

The map below illustrates the positions of our Fire Stations, Headquarters, Training Centre, Technical Service Centre and displays our current disposition of resources.



Who We Are

The Service is governed by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (TWFR), made up of elected representatives (Councillors) from the five local authority areas in Tyne and Wear: Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

Strategic Leadership and management of the Service is carried out by our Executive Leadership Team:



National Influence

TWFRS significantly contributes to national work, driving improvements across the sector. Our senior managers lead a number of national groups. This enables us to influence and drive national performance, whilst promoting learning and sharing good practice, allowing us to continuously improve our service to the public.



Awards and Accreditations

We are exceptionally proud of our people and the first class service we provide to the community of Tyne and Wear, as well as the support and leadership we provide nationally.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) judged us as 'Good' in all three areas of inspection in 2018/19. In addition, we have a number of accreditations and awards highlighted below, demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement and providing the best possible service.

We look forward to the next inspection during 2021.

What We Value



We value service to the community by:

- working with all groups to reduce risk
- treating everyone fairly and with respect
- being answerable to those we serve
- striving for excellence



We value diversity in the Service and community by:

- treating everyone fairly and with respect
- providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- promoting equal opportunities in employment within the Service
- challenging prejudice and discrimination



We value all our employees by practising and promoting:

- fairness and respect
- recognition of merit
- honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- personal development
- co-operative and inclusive working



We value improvement at all levels of the Service by:

- accepting responsibility for our performance
- being open minded
- considering feedback thoughtfully
- learning from our experience
- consulting others

TWFRS is formally adopting the new **National Code of Ethics (Core Code)** which was launched June 2021 by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Local Government Association (LGA), and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC).

Developed in consultation with the sector, the Core Code has been developed following the **State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services**. It is designed to help employees of the Fire and Rescue Service to act in the best way towards each other and while serving the public.

The Core Code sets out five ethical principles, based on the **Seven Principles of Public Life** (the Nolan Principles), which provide a basis for promoting good, and challenging inappropriate behaviour.

We will work with our employees to understand how (if at all) the principles and other factors change our Organisational values. We are preparing a full Code of Ethics Implementation Plan, which will introduce, implement and embed the new Code.

OPERATING CONTEXT

To achieve the goals and priorities set out in this Strategy effectively, we must know and understand the communities we serve. We use local knowledge and shared information to help us identify the areas of most risk and the most vulnerable in our society. This analysis enables us to target our services effectively. Our **Community Risk Profile 2020/23** presents the comprehensive assessment of the community risks in Tyne and Wear, and has informed the development of this Strategy.

We take measured, and innovative, steps to protect our communities. We utilise a robust, intelligence-led approach to understand and analyse risk, operate in well-established partnerships to identify and engage with members of the community that are most at risk

There is a strong correlation between societal deprivation and risk - our area suffers from some of the highest levels of deprivation in England. This results in higher levels of demand for prevention and operational response activities and we work hard to ensure a thorough understanding of current and future risk, to ensure we are prepared for demand.

We continue to face a period of considerable change with significant financial uncertainty because of the potential adverse impact that the COVID-19 pandemic, and EU Exit, may have on the national economy, and the implications this may have on public sector funding.

“It was clear that the organisations leaders were passionate about delivering objectives and supporting their people and the community.”

Source - IiP Report 2020

Our financial planning approach continues to be both flexible and robust despite the potential uncertainties. Our **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)**, which provides analysis of the financial position we are likely to face over the next four years, shows a broadly neutral financial revenue budget position from 2021/22 to 2024/25, based on current Government advice.

Public service reform, financial austerity, an ageing and diverse population, environmental change and the increasing risk of terrorism are just some of the challenges the Service faces.

“I feel proud to work for TWFRS and always portray the Service in a positive light. Speaking with younger members of the community enables me to plant the seeds for their future career development.”

Source - 2019 Employee Survey

STRATEGIC GOALS 2025

We will focus on achieving:



Service Effectiveness

TWFRS are committed to protecting our communities 24-7. We will target our fire prevention and protection activities to those at greatest risk from fire. We will enforce business fire safety legislation and compliance, delivering a first class emergency response that provides value for money.



Efficiency

TWFRS will deliver a robust financial planning approach, we will align budgets and resources appropriate to the risk, never compromising on public safety. Collaborating with other Blue Light partners and achieving value for money.



People

TWFRS will develop and maintain an inclusive workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible, and diverse. Our leaders will be role models, providing positive leadership in line with our values. The health, safety, and welfare of our staff and our community is paramount, and is built into all that we do.

SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS

“Providing first class community safety, operational response and emergency preparedness.”

We will achieve this by continuing to use a wide range of data and intelligence to inform all decision making, and ensure effective targeting of our services to those most at risk. We will seek to share data and intelligence with other agencies to inform our plans. We will provide comprehensive prevention and protection activities to strive to protect people from fires and other emergencies, working with partners to improve community safety and wellbeing.

We will promote and enforce business fire safety legislation and compliance. We will ensure our resources are placed in the optimum locations to provide a first class response to emergencies, maintaining one of the fastest response times in the country. We will ensure our Service is resilient, tested, and prepared for all emergencies – both locally and nationally.



“I enjoy telling people that I am a firefighter in TWFRS and believe that serving my community is important.”

Source - 2019 Employee Survey



“The team take a pride in the service they provide and everyone relies on each other to ensure that the service we deliver is as good as it can be whilst ensuring that we maintain a healthy work life balance.”

Source - 2019 Employee Survey

The following activity gives a picture of how we make Tyne and Wear a safer place to live, work and do business:

- We have successfully reduced the number of accidental fires in peoples homes
- For the period between April 2020 - March 2021 the Service recorded zero fire deaths in peoples homes
- We have reduced the risk of injury to our firefighters by introducing new technology to suppress fires without needing to enter unstable buildings
- We continue to reduce the risk of injury to our firefighters by introducing new technology e.g. body worn video cameras
- We respond more effectively to incidents in high buildings with our Aerial Ladder Platform supporting operational response
- We are one of the fastest responding FRS in the country.

EFFICIENCY

“Delivering a robust, effective financial planning model, aligning resources to risk and ensuring we provide value for money to the public. We will proactively work with partners to provide the best possible service.”



Balancing risk and resources will always be a challenge for the Authority but this is especially so given the ongoing uncertainty surrounding Government spending when so much is presently unknown in terms of the impact on the economy of both the COVID-19 pandemic and EU Exit. The Authority continues to drive efficiencies and has achieved planned underspends in 2019/20 and 2020/21 so that it can reinvest its limited resources into Service priority areas identified through the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and our 2025 vision for the future.



The Authority has a strong track record of overachieving. Through our **Efficiency Plan** (covering 2015/16 to 2019/20) we achieved significant savings of £9.287m which was £1.039m in excess of our Government approved target.

We continue to build on the strong collaboration arrangements in place with partners, including the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), Local Authorities, Northumbria Police, and the Health Service, focusing on efficiency, and delivering better community outcomes. Demonstrating our commitment to regional Fire collaboration, we work closely with our neighbouring fire and rescue services to ensure we are resilient and prepared. Building on the effective co-location and collaboration arrangements with our blue light partners, we are now moving to full integration of services, for example the new tri-service station planned in Hebburn.

“Teamwork and collaboration is an important feature of the Service.”

Source - liP Report 2020

PEOPLE

“We will continue to develop, maintain and provide a workforce that is inclusive, well trained, professional, resilient, skilled, and diverse. We look after our staff providing excellent health, welfare and safety arrangements to ensure they are the best they can be.”



Our people are our most important asset. We are committed to providing a strong training and development culture that ensures public and firefighter safety. We have a range of career development pathways which allow us to widen perspectives and encourage growth in our workforce to support high performance. We will continue to prioritise career development and progression.

We are committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity, and ensuring inclusivity for our community and employees. We will continue to effectively engage with under-represented groups, taking an active role in events and celebrations in the community. We are actively seeking to improve the diversity of our front line firefighters over the next five years.

Our Occupational Health Unit provides comprehensive physical and mental health support to staff through a biopsychosocial model, including superb counselling and trauma support, sharing our expertise to lead the sector in critical event support for employees.

“I love my job. I am lucky that I have a great team to work with. The nature of the job means no day is entirely predictable which in itself can be challenging but with the type of incidents we are responding to we are evolving continuously.”

We consistently achieve positive accreditation about how we look after our people, including Investors in People (Gold Award); FRSEF ‘Excellence’; ROSPA Gold Award’ President’s Award. We will continue to seek external feedback to further lead continuous improvement in an inclusive way. HMICFRS judges us to be GOOD in the People pillar of inspection, and we aim to maintain and further improve this in future inspections.

Our **People and Organisational Development Plan (POD)** sets out five key themes which will guide our work, help us to evolve, change effectively and continue to provide the best service possible, ensuring that everything we do links to our Service vision of ‘Creating the Safest Community’.



Source - 2019 Employee Survey

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2025

To ensure continuous improvement, drive innovation, and use our resources most effectively, it is important to set strategic priorities for the five year period. To achieve this, we have developed a five year programme to manage all our activities consistently, and drive innovation and improvement.

The **'TWFRS 2025 Programme'** was introduced in 2020/21 to facilitate and ensure effective Service transformation. The Programme consists of a number of strategic projects, to enhance collaboration, enable Service improvement, and promote efficiency.

The Programme Board, introduced in 2021, enables all major projects to be managed in a standardised way, and strengthens corporate oversight.

The TWFRS 2025 Programme has three objectives / high level benefits:



Inclusion

Further diversification of the workforce to ensure we reflect our whole community; to have clear, fair and transparent routes to both employment and progression and to have a positive culture where everyone is valued and takes pride and ownership of their actions and behaviour.



An All Hazards Approach to Firefighter Safety

Provides an all hazards approach to firefighter safety, focusing on raising awareness and training on hazard and risk recognition and perception, thus allowing commanders to train to respond to the wide range of incidents they encounter. This builds on the Safe Person Concept.



Digital and Data

To enable the effective use of technology to improve delivery of all our services, which will allow us to offer a wide range of improvement activity, along with transformational ways of working and robust governance and cyber resilience for the 21st Century.

SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF OUR STRATEGY

This Strategy is implemented through Service Plans, which document how we will achieve our vision and strategic goals.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England [2018] requires all Fire and Rescue Services to have an **Integrated Risk Management Plan**. This process is the method used to make significant changes to the shape of the Service, ensuring that services are planned, designed and delivered in a way that balances available resources and community risk.

Annual Service Operating Plan

Our **Annual Service Operating Plan** sets out our priorities and actions for the year, and details the work we will undertake against the three intended / high level benefits of the 2025 Programme, and to achieve our Strategy.

We have several other key plans that help us achieve this Strategy, including:

People and Organisational Development Plan

Our **POD Plan** describes the five themes, the beliefs and expectations that will guide our work with each other and with our partners, helping us to evolve, improve, and change effectively as a Service. The themes will also help us to continue to develop and maintain an inclusive workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)** provides an analysis of the financial position likely to face the Authority over the next four years. It establishes approaches that direct and reinvest our limited resources in addressing the strategic priorities of the Authority, achieve value for money in the use of those resources and assist the budget planning framework for the preparation of the **Revenue Budget** and **Capital Programme**.

“TWFRS has a great reputation as service deliverer and although I don’t take part in front line activities what I do enables other to do so which gives me a sense of pride and connection to service delivery.”

Source - 2019 Employee Survey

“Within our department we all understand the aims of the section and how we all fit in to the overall goals.”

Source - 2019 Employee Survey

Vision - 'Creating the Safest Community'

Mission - 'To save life, reduce risk, provide humanitarian services, and protect the environment'



HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR WORK

Our performance is monitored, managed and analysed at both Service and local authority level, to enable us to identify issues and implement improvement action where required. This approach also allows us to identify successes, so we can build on these and promote good practice across the Service.

When we analyse and measure our performance, we compare ourselves to the other Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in our 'family group' as categorised by Government. The group is more commonly referred to as 'the Mets' and includes: Greater Manchester FRS, London Fire Brigade, Merseyside FRS, South Yorkshire FRS, West Yorkshire FRS and West Midlands FRS. The data captured in our **Performance Reports** is scrutinised quarterly with local operational intelligence incorporated with statistical analysis.

A full range of data on how we are performing is contained in our Chief Fire Officers **Annual Report and our Statement of Assurance**.

Measurement of performance against the objectives in this Strategy will be carried out using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). All KPIs will be analysed and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure a clear and sharp focus on Organisational outcomes.

Performance Management is essential to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and enabling us to deliver the best possible service. The mechanisms above will allow us to ensure timely, high quality monitoring and reporting, with challenging targets and goals. We will hold ourselves accountable for our performance, addressing areas for improvement and sharing good practice to encourage continued improvement in the sector and promoting achievements.



FIRE SERVICE REFORM

In 2016, the Home Office established a fire reform agenda, comprising of three distinct pillars: efficiency and collaboration, accountability and transparency, and workforce reform. The Service continues to drive and support reform and continuous improvement in the sector both on a national level, by leading and driving national groups such as the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Operations Co-ordination Committee and NFCC National Command and Control User Group (NCCUG), and locally to improve services provided to the community of Tyne and Wear.

In the first Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England (2019), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, Sir Thomas Winsor, made six recommendations for national reform of the fire service. The Service is actively contributing to the achievement of these reform areas and will continue to work with the Home Office, HMICFRS, NFCC, and LGA on key areas.

Efficiency and Collaboration

We will continue to create opportunities to collaborate with partners and move towards integration of services, to enable more efficient and effective ways of working. We will continue to work with health and wellbeing partners to create safer, healthier communities, to understand risk better, and deliver a joined up approach to community safety. We will also focus on the continued development and investment in our Estate. Working alongside our blue-light partners, the development of our new carbon neutral tri-service station aims to move beyond traditional co-location, towards full integration to further enhance collaboration arrangements.

Accountability and Transparency

The Authority is the publicly accountable body that oversees the policy and service delivery of TWFRS and comprises of 17 Members, 16 of which are elected Members, nominated by the five constituent councils of Tyne and Wear in line with **Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1985**. **The Policing and Crime Act 2017** established routes by which Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) could become involved in the governance of fire and rescue services and in 2017, the PCC for Northumbria become a member of the Authority.

TWFRS operates an effective publication scheme, which is committed to openness and data transparency and is aligned with the requirements of the **Local Government Transparency Code 2015** and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) **Publication Scheme**. TWFRS publishes information on its website to aid understanding of how the Authority operates, how public money is spent and how Value for Money is achieved.

Workforce Reform

We support a positive working culture by inspiring leadership, embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do, finding and nurturing diverse talent, and caring for the health and well-being of our staff. Our **People and Organisational Development Plan** describes the beliefs and expectations which will guide our work and help us to evolve, improve and change effectively. The plan will also help us to continue to develop and maintain an inclusive workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse, whose aim is to provide the best service possible for the benefit of our communities.

Fire Standards

We welcome, and are supporting, the development of the new professional standards by the Fire Standards Board. HMICFRS will provide benchmarking and opportunities to share notable practice. Implementing National Operational Guidance and National Operational Learning will assist the Service in achieving its aspiration of exceeding the Operational Response Fire standards. This will be delivered through the 'all hazards' approach to Firefighter Safety, that underpins national operational guidance.

Implementing the **National Code of Ethics (Core Code)** which was recently launched by the **National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)**, **Local Government Association (LGA)**, and the **Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)**, will support organisational culture and workforce diversity, ensuring that communities are supported in the best way.

We will continue to evolve and improve our Service in response to national reform recommendations and updated legislation. We will work alongside the Home Office, National Fire Chief's Council and our **Local Resilience Forum** to implement, share and inform best practice in the sector.



GOVERNANCE

Responsibility for the delivery of this Strategy lies with the Chief Fire Officer / Clerk to the Authority (Head of Paid Services) and is delegated to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, to ensure the outcomes and benefits are realised.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority ("The Authority") has a duty under the **Local Government Act 1999** to ensure that 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. The Service adheres to financial procedures for budget setting, monitoring and the production of the final accounts.

Further, the **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015** stipulate that the Authority should conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of their systems of internal control and prepare an **Annual Governance Statement**. The purpose of this statement is for the Authority to report publicly on its arrangements for ensuring that business is conducted in accordance with the law, regulations and proper practices and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for.

The Annual Governance Statement forms part of the annual **Statement of Accounts** and reports on the extent of the Authority's compliance with the principles of good governance, including how it manages internal control arrangements, the effectiveness of those arrangements and sets out action for planned changes in the coming year.

The **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England**¹ sets out a requirement for the Authority to operate within a clearly defined statutory framework and to produce an annual **Statement of Assurance**. The Statement should demonstrate how the Authority has acted in accordance with the requirements of the National Framework while discharging its functions, with respect to financial, governance and operational matters.

The Authority also operates a **Code of Governance**, which adheres to the **Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework**² published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (**CIPFA**) in association with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (**SOLACE**). This framework assists in developing and shaping an informed approach to governance, aimed at achieving the highest standards in a measured and proportionate way. This Code comprises of systems and processes that are used to direct and control the Authority's activities. It also enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and consider whether these objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

"TWFRS is quite possibly the most ethical and transparent organisation I have been part of."

Source - FA Governance Members
Questionnaires 2020

FEEDBACK AND FURTHER INFORMATION

This Strategy sets out TWFRS direction for the next five years, as well as a reference point and measures to help us stay on the right track.

The rest is for us to achieve together through a shared commitment and collective action. If you would like to comment on this document or the services provided by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service – we welcome your feedback and input in helping shape our Service.

If you would like our plan in another format or language, please contact us so we can discuss your needs.

A glossary of abbreviations can be found [here](#).

For further details, please contact
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Alternatively, if you would like more information regarding Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, you can visit our website:
www.twfire.gov.uk



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