

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

Creating the Safest Community



Statement of Assurance and Annual Report

2018 / 2019



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Foreword – TWFA Chair Councillor Tony Taylor

Welcome to our Statement of Assurance and Annual Report for 2018/19. This report shares our performance in 2018/2019 and the work we are delivering to meet our vision of 'Creating the Safest Community' across Tyne and Wear.

This has been a year of achievement and challenge for the Fire Authority, particularly as we continue to deliver high quality services with a reducing budget. The Authority has faced some of the most challenging funding settlements across fire and rescue services in England since 2010 – we have made over £13m of IRMP efficiencies since 2010/11 to date. Together with austerity, the Authority has had to manage higher costs such as inflation and pay awards which has meant that we have had no option but to make total budget savings of just over £25m.

This was brought into sharp focus when we launched a public consultation on proposed changes to our operational response as set out in our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The Response Review contained three options, and while they were driven by financial pressures their aim was to also prepare the Service for a future that will involve changing demand. One option – to dynamically adjust the distribution and availability of appliances based on risk and demand – was agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2019, and introduced in April 2019. The Fire Authority agreed to postpone making a decision on the other two options, until more information comes to light on our future funding settlement.

While there is still a lack of clarity about our funding, mainly due to politicians' ongoing focus on national issues such as Brexit, we continue to have positive dialogues with the Home Office on the key challenges we face.

In particular, this is as we try to balance our available resources against heightened fire risk levels associated with the areas of high deprivation within our region.

This was also our first year to be inspected under the new Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). It was a very thorough and robust process, and the Fire Authority was very pleased that the Service received 'Good' grades across the three 'pillars' of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. However, we can only speculate on how much better these grades could have been if we had benefited from a fairer funding formula.

It's a great tribute to everyone who works for the Service that their commitment and dedication to keeping the people of Tyne and Wear safe received such recognition. I and all Fire Authority members would like to commend them for their dedication to the Service and I would also like to thank Chris, and the Assistant Chief Fire Officers – John Baines and Alan Robson - for their support and advice.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the previous Fire Authority Chair, Barry Curran for the excellent contribution he made throughout the year.



Chief Fire Officer Chris Lowther

This has been a year when we have been tested as a fire and rescue service through the new HMICFRS inspection regime. It has also been a period of focus on the changing nature of our services and how we can continue to deliver them within a challenging financial climate.

The operation of our Service took centre stage last year - from our first HMICFRS inspection to our public consultation on options within our IRMP. Proposing changes to our Service presents us with many challenges. The options here, whilst primarily driven by our statutory requirement to balance our budget, also reflected the changes in the incidents we attend and those within our society – from an increase in deliberate fires to the impact of austerity measures on the communities we serve.

How we deliver our current services and sustain them for the future resulted in lots of healthy debate from our staff and communities, and came under the scrutiny of our MPs through a Westminster Hall debate, where Nick Hurd MP, then Minister of State at the Home Office, provided the Government's response.

These activities have also facilitated some wider discussions on our funding formula and we continue to work closely with colleagues in the Home Office and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to help inform the debate and potentially future funding decisions.

Operationally, we faced several challenging fires, none more so than the fire at the Alex Smiles Waste Management site in Sunderland, which lasted for over two weeks. Fortunately, while such fires are rare, they do test our resources – both in appliances and firefighters – however, we were able to manage both despite several other significant fires also occurring at the same time.

Our mutual aid arrangements with our neighbouring fire and rescue services (FRSs) providing the additional resilience required for such occasions.

It was also the year when we recruited firefighters for the first time in almost a decade. Bringing new and wider experiences into our operational crews is the lifeblood for improvement and we hope to continue to encourage more diversity with a further campaign before the end of the next financial year (March 2020).

We continue to have a strong performance record – and this was further confirmed by being graded as a Good Service by HMICFRS, in June of 2019. Only one of a few FRS, so far inspected, who has received such an accolade. This achievement can be placed squarely at the door of everyone who works for the Service and we will use this to further strengthen and improve our Service for our staff and the communities of Tyne and Wear

None of what is reported in the following pages would have been possible without the dedication and professionalism of our firefighters and the commitment and expertise of all the staff who help make our Service run so effectively. I would like to thank them all for their continued service to both TWFRS and to their communities.

Our vision and purpose

We are proud to serve the people of Tyne and Wear. Our Vision of 'Creating the Safest Community' helps us to meet the needs of our communities every day, ensuring their safety from fires and other emergencies.

Our vision statement is:

Creating the Safest Community

Our mission is:

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

Our team of dedicated staff and volunteers adhere to set of core values that emphasise fairness and respect for others. A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of this approach. At every level of the Service, we promote equality of opportunity and an inclusive culture across our workforce through our Leadership Bond. We have been recognised again by Stonewall in the top 100 inclusive employers in Britain.

Our **Strategic Community Safety Plan 2017-20 (SCSP)** sets our overarching approach to serving the communities of Tyne and Wear.

By providing high quality services to our communities and stakeholders, we have built on our strong partnership approach to ensure we remain one of the safest, most inclusive and highest performing public services.

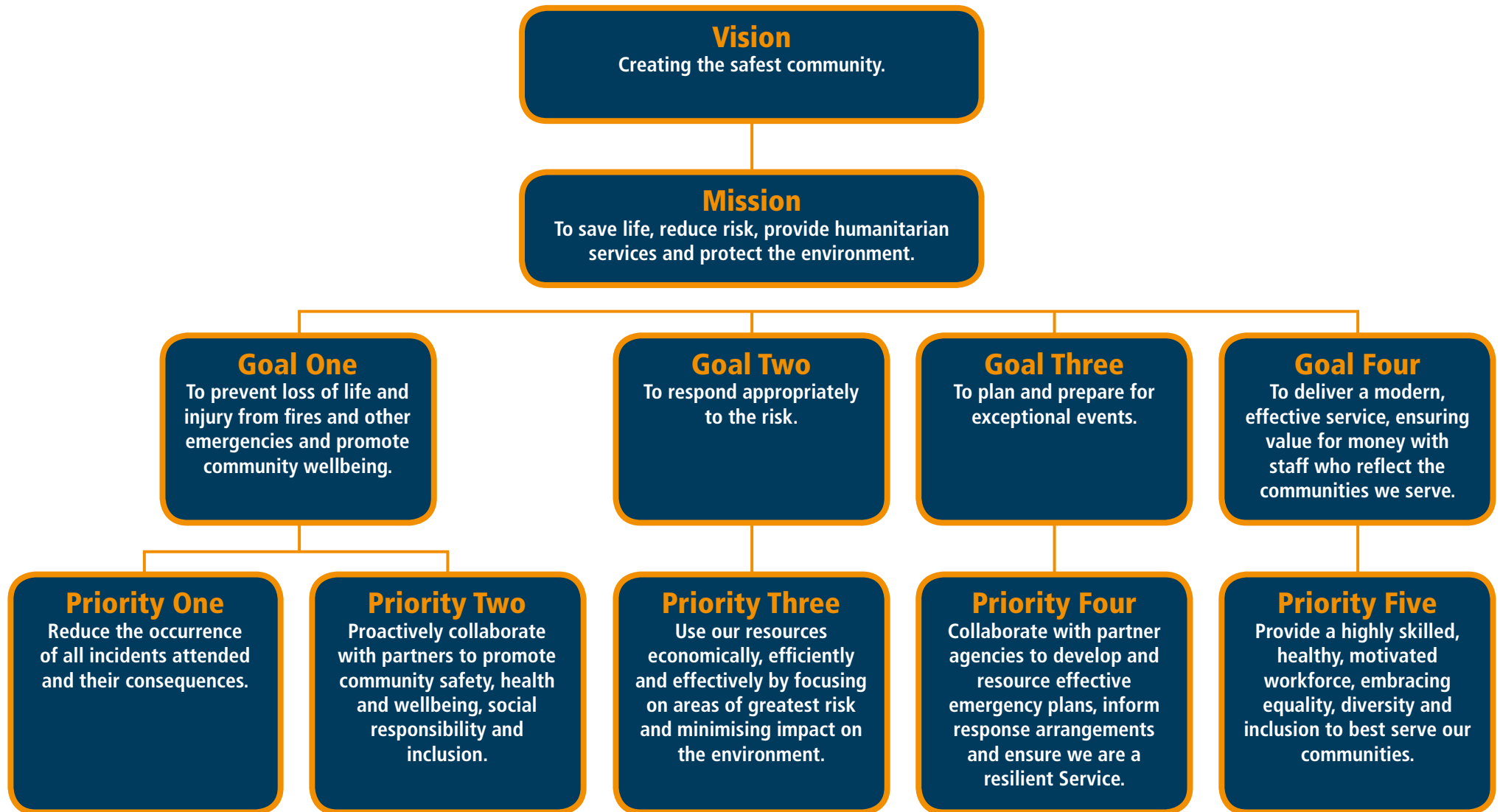
The SCSP is underpinned by three strategies: the Community Safety Strategy, Organisational Development Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy. For more details, please visit our website: www.twfire.gov.uk

Consulting on our plans

We value the views, opinions and involvement of others in the delivery of our services. Where appropriate, this includes employees, Authority Members, members of the public, other stakeholders and community groups.

Our formal Consultation Policy sets out how we will engage with our stakeholders and consult on the issues that affect them. In 2018/19, we conducted a large-scale consultation on proposed changes to our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), receiving over 3,000 responses.

Our Goals and Priorities



Our Values



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 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 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 improvement at all levels of the Service by:

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



Strategic Planning Framework



Services to our community

Every day we ensure the safety of 1.12 million people across Tyne and Wear and a wide range of associated risks.



1.12
million
residents



1
international
airport



2.42 million
m² retail floor
space



512,000
dwellings



73,000
students, and
3 universities



2 major cities
and 28,000
business sites



5 local
authority
areas



High levels
of deprivation



60 Metro
stations

Additional to this we focus on four key areas:

Prevention: We prevent incidents from happening, through education, advice and intervention. Through understanding our community and working with partners, we identify and support those who are at most risk.

Protection: We work with businesses to reduce the risk and impact of fire on the business community. We support economic growth through intelligence-led proportionate regulation.

Response: We respond quickly and effectively to fire and rescue incidents to reduce the loss of life, injuries and damage to property. We are the second fastest metropolitan service to respond to dwelling fires.

Resilience: We help to protect our national infrastructure in the event of catastrophic incidents. We have specialist teams who enhance our ability to respond to major emergencies such as terrorist attacks, industrial and domestic accidents and natural disasters.

Prevention and Education

We believe that prevention and education is the most effective way to save lives and minimise injuries through fire and other emergencies. We focus our resources to where they are needed, targeting those most vulnerable to fire risk.

We maintain a Community Risk Profile to help us understand the risks across Tyne and Wear and use this to implement our Home Safety Check Targeting Procedure and Vulnerable Persons Policy.

Accidental fire in the home is the biggest cause of fire deaths and we do all we can to reduce these fatalities, primarily by increasing smoke alarm ownership across the communities of Tyne and Wear. Our Prevention and Education teams work to educate people about how they can protect themselves from fire. In 2018/19, we achieved this in the following ways:

- **Home Safety Checks:**

We delivered over 24,600 Home Safety Checks, providing tailored home fire safety advice and fitting over 15,100 smoke alarms. Our Home Safety Checks also consider health and wellbeing, focusing on a person-centred approach.

- **Targeting fires started deliberately:**

Our specialist teams deliver our juvenile fire-setter education programme, which tackles fire-setting behaviour displayed by young people. We engage with schools located within identified hot spot areas and deliver targeted educational messages.

- **SafetyWorks!:**

In 2018/19 14,343 people visited our interactive safety centre, SafetyWorks! At the centre we deliver key safety campaigns with the aim of improving safety and reducing the impact of deliberate fire and anti-social behaviour. Safetyworks! is a multi-agency centre managed by TWFRS, with the support of the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Northumbria Police, St Johns Ambulance, Nexus, Sainsbury and the Royal National Lifeboats Institution (RNLI).

- **School education:**

Our school education programme targets students in Year 6 (aged 10/11) and Year 8 (aged 12/13). Year 6 sessions focus on fire safety in the home, and educates students about hoax calls and deliberate fire setting. Year 8 sessions focus on the consequences of anti-social behaviour, arson and attacks on firefighters, as well as introducing water and road safety education.

- **Educational campaigns:**

We use traditional and social media and education campaigns to increase awareness of fire safety. During our 2018 bonfire campaign, we achieved a reduction in deliberate fires of over one-quarter (26.8%) over a six-week period. We visited 21 secondary schools to talk about the dangers associated with fireworks, delivering to 12,057 students. SafetyWorks! also delivered targeted education sessions to 14 Special Educational Needs schools and three pupil referral units, engaging 410 students in total. Through our social media platforms, we delivered key messages to over 77,700 people. We produced an educational DVD highlighting the serious and life-changing consequences of burns and their effects on all involved.

Case Study: Queen's Fire Service Medal for services to water safety

Firefighter Tommy Richardson was awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service in the 2019 New Year Honours List, for his tireless work in encouraging water safety and leading the way in trying to reduce water-related deaths. Firefighter Richardson has arranged water safety demonstrations as well as working with partners, businesses and charities to raise awareness of water safety.

Our Swift Water Rescue Team based at Byker Community Fire Station has been at the forefront of educating the wider community on the importance of water safety, including leading a pilot with the RNLI to train employees of waterside businesses on throw bag rescue. To date over 70 people have been trained and there have been four successful rescues by the same riverside venue in Gateshead.



Protection

Our protection work covers all premises other than single private dwellings. This includes, for example, commercial premises and high-rise buildings.

Our aim is to educate and inform businesses about fire safety, and minimise the need for prosecutions and enforcement activity.

Throughout 2018/19 we:

- conducted 1,714 fire safety audits on commercial premises, of which 528 led to informal notifications
- issued two Alteration Notices (which require relevant authorities be informed of planned alterations that may compromise fire safety), 13 Enforcement Notices (which require premises to be brought up to standard within 28 days) and twenty five Prohibition Notices (which will cease or restrict the premise's use).
- conducted two prosecutions, both leading to convictions.

We meet our statutory duty by carrying out a Risk-Based Inspection Programme of all premises throughout our five local authority areas. This ensures that premises presenting the highest risk and lowest compliance are audited and inspected most frequently. We also provide fire safety advice in the workplace to assist employers in complying with the legislation and achieving a safe building for employees and visitors.

We continue to carry out targeted and timely engagements following large-scale incidents to improve fire safety awareness within the business community and promote a safer community.

We are part of the Primary Authority Scheme (PAS), which is a means for businesses to receive tailored advice on fire safety regulations through a single point of contact. Our PAS continues to grow in strength since the introduction of fire safety to the overall scheme in 2014. We have new partners joining us from a wide variety of sectors, from national housing providers to large retailers. The scheme has currently 10 members who have benefited from the partnership in areas such as advice on policies and procedures, fire safety training and the implementation of inspection plans.

Case Study: Educating businesses

Following a large fire in a Peacocks clothing store in Sunderland in January 2019, our Fire Safety team carried out extensive engagement with businesses in the surrounding area. The purpose was to increase fire safety awareness in the locality, by providing targeted advice on arson reduction and compliance with the Fire Safety Order. This resulted in 25 engagements with businesses and also significant media and social media coverage.

Our Fire Safety team continues to forge strong links across the region – from regional Fire Safety management meetings to regular joint professional development opportunities. This embedded collaborative approach allows for the effective sharing of knowledge and best practice for all.

We fully support and promote economic growth through better regulation. Where businesses fail to comply with fire safety legislation, we will use appropriate, proportionate enforcement action, including prosecution where appropriate, to ensure compliance and public safety.



Case Study: Protecting public safety

Following concerns raised by a member of our staff in attendance at a fire in a manufacturing unit in Washington, our Fire Safety Inspectors carried out a Fire Safety Audit at the premises. A risk of death or serious injury to persons in and around the premises was identified. The contraventions included:

- inadequate means of escape, including multiple locked and obstructed exits
- no suitable means of raising the alarm in event of fire
- no fire risk assessment
- no policies and procedures relating to fire
- no staff training
- inappropriate provision of emergency lighting.

These factors, combined with the fire, presented a serious risk to life to those inside the premises. As a result, the company was prosecuted for eight offences under the Fire Safety Order.

Whilst the Service endeavours to work with owners to make buildings safe, this case demonstrates that we will not hesitate to take action when required.

Anyone convicted of fire safety offences, could face an unlimited fine and/or be imprisoned for up to two years.

Grenfell Tower Fire

We continue to work with our community to support them following lessons learned from this tragic event:

This has included:

- visiting high-rise properties to provide reassurance and conduct safety checks
- conducting audits of high-rise buildings and providing building owners and managers with the opportunity to ask advice and better assess the fire safety measures in place within their buildings
- conducting high-rise training in collaboration with partners utilising a local authority premises to ensure we respond effectively to high-rise incidents.

Response

To create the safest community we have specialist equipment and resources to respond to fires and other emergencies. During 2018/19, our Control team received 29,782 emergency calls.

We operate frontline appliances ranging from standard fire engines through to specialist appliances for specific situations. Each fire engine carries a crew of up to four firefighters and is equipped with the latest radio and computer technology, providing the vital communication link between operational crews and fire control. We also use Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) to respond to lower risk incidents.

We respond to a wide range of emergency incidents, including:

- Road traffic collisions, from single car accidents to high-speed multi-vehicle crashes involving cars, lorries and buses.
- Rescues from water, led by our team of specialist Swift Water Rescue Technicians along with our fireboat, who keep our community safe on both the Tyne and the Wear, as well as on other inland waterways.

- Responding to flooding, using our high volume pump (HVP) that can remove large quantities of flood water or provide large amounts of water for firefighting at larger incidents. The HVP is capable of pumping 7000 litres of water per minute across great distances using up to three kilometres of hose.
- Decontamination, with our highly trained employees using equipment that can limit the harmful effects of the release of hazardous materials, often on a large scale.
- Specialist rescue, including that of people from height, from both cliffs and bridges. Other specialist rescue teams deal with structural collapse incidents and animal rescues.

Training Firefighters to Respond and Assurance of our Operations

Initial firefighter training commences with a 14-week basic training course covering the core practical and theoretical elements of the role of a firefighter. The initial course prepares the new firefighter for the operational environment; once posted to a station they then begin a development programme which continues to enhance their skills, knowledge and application of skills previously learnt. Throughout their development, each firefighter is required to complete a series of rigorous assessments to ensure that they meet the high standards required. Having successfully completed a 36-month assessment, the firefighter will be considered competent in role.

Fully qualified firefighters at all levels of the Service are required to maintain competence within a national framework of occupational standards and are subject to regular training, assessment and validation throughout their career relevant to their role.

The standard of performance is monitored through regular Performance and Review activities. A dedicated team supported by officers attend operational incidents, training and exercises to observe performance. The Service uses its Risk Management Assurance Database (RMAD) to capture learning; identifying areas of notable practice or areas where further development opportunities have been identified. Through the RMAD, action plans are tracked through to successful completion ensuring a fully auditable route to completion is maintained. The outcomes are shared across the Service to promote good practice and improve performance.

Case Study: Responding to a fire at Alex Smiles Recycling Centre, Sunderland

We responded to a major incident at a disused recycling plant, Alex Smiles Recycling Centre.

A large number of fire appliances and specialist resources were used over an extended period, to extinguish the deep-seated fire, ensure that the environment was protected and that the effects of the large smoke plumes on nearby residents were minimised.

This was a co-ordinated multi-agency effort, with the emergency phase being effectively dealt with by the TWFRS.



Case Study: Responding to flooding at Newburn Bridge

Firefighters were called to an unexpected failure of a water main which resulted in approximately 400 m² of residential property becoming submerged in up to 3m of water. This included three motor vehicles that were fully under water.

Four appliances were used to prevent escalation of the incident and prevent any flooding to property. We then worked closely with the Environment Agency and the local authority, using specialist equipment and appliances to support the return to normality.



Resilience

The National Resilience programme is an essential part of government arrangements to protect the national infrastructure in the event of catastrophic incidents. It has provided us with a Mass Decontamination Module (MDM), a High Volume Pumping Unit (HVP), an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) unit, and a Detection Identification and Monitoring (DIM) capability, all of which enhance our ability to respond to major emergencies such as terrorist attacks, industrial and domestic accidents and natural disasters.

The threat of terrorism is increasing and to ensure the safety of the people in Tyne and Wear, we train continuously so that we are ready to respond to any foreseen threat. This includes large-scale exercises, which test all our capabilities for a simulated armed terrorist attack.

We have hosted a regional training day working alongside the Environment Agency where they demonstrated the support they can provide and we explained how the national Memorandum of Understanding ensures we work together smoothly.

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We also took part in a three-day exercise, Exercise Border Reiver, which started in Scotland and ended in Northumberland, testing cross-border arrangements. The Exercise involved: ourselves, Police Scotland, Northumbria Police, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, North East Ambulance Service, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, Transport Scotland, NHS Scotland, NHS England, the Ministry of Defence, and City of Edinburgh, Angus and Northumberland County Councils.

We supported Exercise Stephenson in the testing of a joint emergency service and partner response to the detonation of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) to ensure the right capabilities, processes and arrangements were in place and partnerships were prepared to manage the mitigate this threat.

Our Resilience team also oversees the upper tier Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites within Tyne and Wear.

We engage with the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum and work collaboratively with our partners on various areas of business continuity planning (e.g. national fuel shortages, pandemic influenza, cyber-attacks, and severe weather).

Local resilience planning is also supported by the Government's National Resilience Programme through the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT). This has enabled us to take an active role in national resilience exercise planning, be well informed and share and collaborate on National Resilience issues.

We also began the training of a new USAR dog – Frankie. This K9 capability will be a valuable addition to the already full USAR capability held within TWFRS, and will be a welcome addition to the National Resilience Assets.

Following the tragic terrorist attack at Manchester Arena, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, commissioned an independent review of the tragic event. Following publication of the Kerslake Review and subsequent recommendations, we have made the required revisions to our policies and procedures.

Collaboration with partners

We continue to develop our partnerships and work in collaboration to improve community safety. This builds on a longstanding commitment to working closely with others to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency services, as well as to meet the requirements of the Police and Crime Act 2017.

We have formalised governance arrangements with partners including Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria, Northumbria Police and the North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

The public benefits from collaboration are visible within our community, including co-location with other emergency services at our stations. This includes Northumbria Police, North East Ambulance Service, Great North Air Ambulance, the North of Tyne Mountain Rescue team and Northumbria Blood Bikes.

We will continue to work with partners to find better ways of working together to ensure we keep our community safe, improve services and deliver value for money. Examples of how we currently improve outcomes for the community include:

- **Working in partnership with social housing, health and the police:** This allows us to continually work closely with key partners to identify the most vulnerable and ensure that appropriate actions are taken to remove or mitigate their risk from fire. This includes the installation of Telecare, packages of care, onward referrals to appropriate partners, the continued support for the installation of water suppression systems and seeking innovative technology solutions for those most at risk.
- **Delivering youth diversionary activities:** This includes Fire Cadets, the Phoenix Project and the Prince's Trust Team Programme. In 2018/19, 380 people successfully completed at least one of the three Phoenix Project courses and 98 people successfully completed the Prince's Trust Programme.

The aim of these programmes is to provide young people with a personal development opportunity and deliver key advice around home fire safety, personal safety, an understanding of the impact and consequences of hoax calls, deliberate fire-setting and anti-social behaviour.

- **Partnership collaborations to tackle deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour:** This includes forming a joint approach to identifying vulnerability and the sharing of key cross-service safety messages alongside Northumbria Police and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.
- **Partnership working to improve water safety:** This includes working with the RNLI to engage with waterside communities and businesses within Tyne and Wear through the provision of advice around water safety and where appropriate specific training on the deployment of throw bags.
- **Multi-agency response:** We host a number of national assets that enable us to respond to any foreseen incidents and we continually test our effectiveness by conducting regional and national multi-agency incident response exercises. We are also working with partners to optimise multi-agency response and resilience through enhanced working relationships in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP).

- **National Operational Learning and Joint**

Organisational Learning: The sharing of notable practice or opportunities for development beyond our immediate Service is extremely important. National Organisational Learning (NOL) and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) platforms enable us to share our learning on a national level within the fire and rescue sector (NOL) and partner emergency services, including Police, Ambulance etc. (JOL). Each of these platforms are assisting emergency services to have an improved shared understanding of risk and how services have overcome these challenges. This promotes the safety and welfare of our communities and personnel.

Operational Assurance

Responding to emergencies is core to our role as a fire and rescue service, where risk is at its highest, and our operational competence must be the very best. A person is operationally competent only when they can apply their skills, knowledge and understanding at operational incidents or in a realistic simulation.

Within the National Occupational Standards (NOS) that apply to fire and rescue services, there is a requirement to implement a quality assurance system.

Such systems ensure:

- we deliver our services to a standard expected of the communities we serve
- our operational staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding in order to fulfil the vast array of operational demands placed upon them
- continuous development of a safe, and competent operational workforce
- that issues are managed and rectified in an appropriate and timely manner.

We implement Operational Assurance so that an appropriate quality management system is in place. To facilitate this, we undertake regular performance and review of all aspects of our operational performance.



Performance

Performance improvement.

We recognise the benefits of change and continue to work closely with our partners to support national reform of the fire and rescue service – including efficiency and collaboration, transparency and accountability, and workforce reform. We have particularly embraced the opportunities arising from two key developments at national level.

Firstly, in 2018/19 we had our first inspection under the newly established inspectorate for fire and rescue services, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). We were pleased to be acknowledged as Good in all three areas inspected: Effectiveness, Efficiency and People, a testament to the hard work and commitment of our staff and volunteers. Following our inspection, we have developed and are now delivering an improvement plan to help us develop our Service in the future.

Secondly, 2018/19 saw the establishment of the independent Fire Standards Board (FSB), which will oversee the development of a new set of professional standards for fire and rescue services. We have held valuable early discussions with members of the FSB and look forward to working closely with them as the Standards are developed.

The Government is ensuring greater joint working through the Police and Crime Act's inclusion of a statutory duty to collaborate. Such collaborative working helps us to achieve the objectives of fire service reform.

Our Organisational Development Strategy sets our approach to organisational design and how we lead our people and drive performance. This has been instrumental in developing our leaders of the future. We are rated Excellent under the Fire Service Equality Framework but there is more we can do. The diversity of our workforce and ensuring an inclusive approach in all that we do, will be an important focus for us in our future work.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

We are required by law to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) to manage change, strengthen prevention, reduce costs and risk in our community. We have successfully applied this process for more than 10 years, most recently with our IRMP 2017-20.

We have made over £13m of IRMP efficiencies since 2010/11 to date, with many of the efficiency ideas coming from our own employees. However, we still need to address a projected gap in resources of approximately £4.1m by 2022/2023.

We have established specialist working groups to review how we perform and respond to risk, ensuring we achieve the best possible outcomes for our community. In 2018/19, we have explored the following areas to improve our efficiency and effectiveness:

- how we respond relative to risk
- explore further opportunities for collaborative working with emergency services and other partners
- examine our ways of working and consider opportunities for further efficiency and effectiveness.

Key Developments

• **Changing the number of firefighters on our fire engines** – Following a decision by our Fire Authority in December 2017 to change the level of crewing on fire engines from five to four firefighters at nine stations, this was successfully implemented in two phases. The first phase was to introduce this at four stations from 1st January 2018 with the remaining five stations being implemented in June 2018. This action has resulted in full year savings of over £1.0m. This was an essential decision in order for us to balance our available resources against risks to our firefighters and community. We are confident that this decision does not present further risk to our firefighters nor the professional and dedicated service that we provide to our community.

• **Relocating fire engines based on risk and resulting demand** – Following detailed analysis of the risk and incident response profiles across Tyne and Wear, and subsequent staff and public consultation, it was approved by our Fire Authority in February 2019 to relocate two fire engines, two specialist fire engines and two Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) to different fire stations. This ensures better alignment to the risk and resulting demand profiles. These moves will commence in April 2019, our next financial year, and will result in a full year saving of over £0.7m. We continue to monitor our performance to ensure we have the right resources in the right place at the right time, staffed by highly skilled firefighters.

• **Estates** – Following a detailed property portfolio review we identified surplus assets which will generate capital receipts to help fund further essential capital projects over the next two years.

Investment

We have also invested significantly in equipment to keep our communities and firefighters safe. This includes the addition of specialist first aid equipment, a programme for the replacement of all of our firefighting hose, the purchase of new firefighting foam equipment, and the replacement of our breathing apparatus face masks. The Service has also developed its investment strategy to allow the research of technology to support the service into the future. In 2018/2019, our investment strategy identified and planned for a number of commissions within the 2019/20 financial budget that includes new fire appliances, personal protective equipment and body worn cameras.

Operational Communications

The Emergency Services Network (ESN) is a new wide area 'radio' scheme that is being delivered by the Emergency Services' Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). The ESN will provide a common communications platform for all emergency services, supporting collaborative communications and enhancing access to data and information thus improving community outcomes. In 2018/19, the Service invested in equipment in our Control Room and fire appliances to support this transition.

Business Continuity

Under the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), we manage an effective business continuity management system, aligned with industry best practice (Good Practices Guidelines) and ISO 22301. The system details how we will continue to deliver our critical functions in the event of a business disruption.

Heightened Threat of Terrorism

The type and scale of terrorist attack changes continuously, therefore our capabilities must be flexible enough to respond to the new demands placed upon the Service. To do this we use the latest information available, work alongside our partners, and test our capabilities to ensure our effectiveness.

Awards & Accreditation

We have been successful in achieving several awards and accreditations, including:

Investor in People (maintained Gold award).

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) (Gold award).

Inclusive Top 50 Employers Award
(achieved 10th place in November 2018)

We were included in the top 100 inclusive employers in Britain after being included in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

To align with the North East Better Health at Work Award we have supported several campaigns to focus on healthy eating, work-life balance and managing stress.

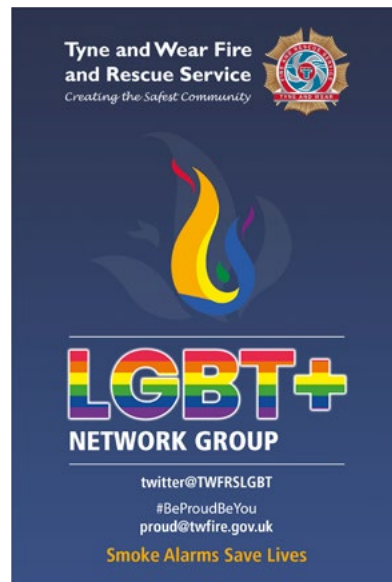


North East
Better Health
at Work Award

Events

In November 2018 our LGBT+ staff network hosted the inaugural national fire and rescue service LGBT+ network conference. The conference was attended by 23 fire and rescue services and representatives from the Police and Army.

The aim of the conference was to bring services together with a view to creating a national LGBT+ network in line with our colleagues in the Police and Ambulance Services. A keynote speech was delivered by the Chair of the Ambulance Service's national LGBT+ network and workshops were delivered by representatives from the police, academia and voluntary sector. The conference was attended by almost 100 delegates and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.



Equality and diversity is part of our everyday lives. We strive to provide equal access to our services and equality for all in the workplace. We embrace diversity by working with organisations to strengthen our Service.



Efficiency Plan and Future Actions

In September 2016 our Fire Authority published its Efficiency Plan, covering the four financial years 2016/2017 to 2019/2020. This is a Government requirement to allow the Fire Authority to accept a Four Year Grant Funding Settlement offered to all authorities. The Efficiency Plan sets out the Fire Authority's detailed approach to the delivery of savings necessary to address the reductions in funding over this four-year period.

The Efficiency Plan identified savings of £8.248m to be achieved over the four-year period, based on the Fire Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/2017 to 2019/2020 and reported to members in February 2016. More detailed information on the Efficiency Plan can be found at www.twfire.gov.uk.

	Published 4 Year Efficiency Plan £'000	Actuals achieved £'000
2016/17 – Budget Efficiencies	1,323	1,323
IRMP Actions	1,184	1,184
2017/18 – Budget Efficiencies	1,394	1,441
IRMP Actions	1,773	2,267
2018/19 – Budget Efficiencies	4	948
IRMP Actions	1081	923
Total as at 31st March 2019	6,759	8,086
Further Proposed Savings:		
2019/20 – Budget Efficiencies	0	346
IRMP Actions	1,489	110
Total	8,248	8,542

Although the Fire Authority has found savings of £8.086m by 2018/2019, £1.327m more than that set out in the Efficiency Plan, it still has to deal with grant funding reductions and spending pressures, such as significant inflationary cost increases and pay awards.

A further £0.162m still has to be found in the remaining year of the four year Efficiency Plan, for which planned savings totalling £0.456m have been identified to date. Any additional savings beyond the total in the Efficiency Plan will help address the increased future budget gap that has developed since the Plan was drafted.

Spending Pressures and Commitments

In addition to funding changes, our Fire Authority must also plan for a range of spending pressures and commitments that are not funded by Government. We take these spending commitments into account in our Budget Planning Framework, reviewing and refining them throughout the budget setting process.

Performance Data

We aim to get to people who need us as fast as we can. We closely monitor our response times and review how we can remain amongst the fastest responders within our available resources. This is demonstrated by the fact we are the second fastest metropolitan service in responding to dwelling fires.

Our targeted prevention work plays a major role in keeping people safe. Our Home Safety Checks and other extensive preventative work with partners helps reduce the number of fires in the home.

This can be seen in our performance at incidents within dwellings. We have the third lowest number of deaths from all metropolitan FRSs along with the second lowest number of injuries recorded from accidental dwelling fires amongst metropolitan service. This proactive work is also undertaken in our fire safety activity, risk based inspection programme and operational health checks. This is where we engage with the business sector to keep people safe in their working environment.

However, Tyne and Wear includes areas which are disproportionately high in deprivation and unemployment. Local authorities and blue light services have seen reductions in their budgets and many community activities are no longer available. This environment has also seen an increase in anti-social behaviour. We are working with partners to identify joint solutions to anti-social behaviour and working with communities to raise awareness of fire prevention and safety.

This section of the report outlines the key performance areas that we measure and review to improve the safety of people in Tyne and Wear.

Deaths and injuries – Key facts

4% (7) decrease in the number of injuries occurred from fires (LI05)

5 fatalities (LI02)

27% (10) more injuries from accidental dwelling fires (LI03)

30% (14) of the victims who went to hospital were aged 60 or over (LI03)

- In 74% (35) of injuries from accidental dwelling fires, the fire originated in the kitchen (LI03).
- In 83% (39) of injuries from accidental dwelling fires, the injuries appeared to be slight (LI03).
- In 61% (106) of injuries from all fires, first aid was given at scene or a precautionary check was recommended (LI05).
- There were 145 fires in which there was 174 injuries recorded, 55% (95) were either “Lone Person or Single Parent” (LI05).

Fire attendances

3% (9) reduction in accidental kitchen fires (LI09)

5% (171) reduction in deliberate refuse fires (LI18)

2% (79) increase in deliberate secondary fires (LI16)

3% (14) increase in accidental dwelling fires (LI08)

- 5% (10) reduction in accidental kitchen fires in dwellings which started in the cooker/oven (LI09).
- 55% (301) of accidental dwelling fires required no fire fighter action or were extinguished by small means (LI08).
- 4% (73) increase in the number of primary fires attended (LI29).
- 47% (870) of the 1870 primary fires were recorded as deliberate (LI17).
- 40% (755) of primary fires had a property type of ‘Road vehicle’, an increase of 11% (73) (LI29).

False alarms

33% (566) of Automatic Fire Alarm (AFAs) calls to non domestic premises were due to faulty alarms (LI22)

2% (28) reduction in AFAs from a non domestic premises (LI22)

2% (59) reduction in AFAs in domestic premises (LI23)

46% (1178) of domestic AFA calls are due to cooking or burnt toast (LI23)

- 22% (373) of non domestic AFA calls are to education premises (LI22).
- 19% (321) of non domestic premises AFA calls were from premises type ‘Hospitals and medical care’ (LI22).
- 39% (1001) of false alarms in domestic premises were to ‘purpose built flat/maisonette-multiple occupancy’ (LI23).
- 33% (852) of false alarms in domestic premises were to ‘self contained sheltered housing’ (LI23).

Local Indicators overview 2018/19

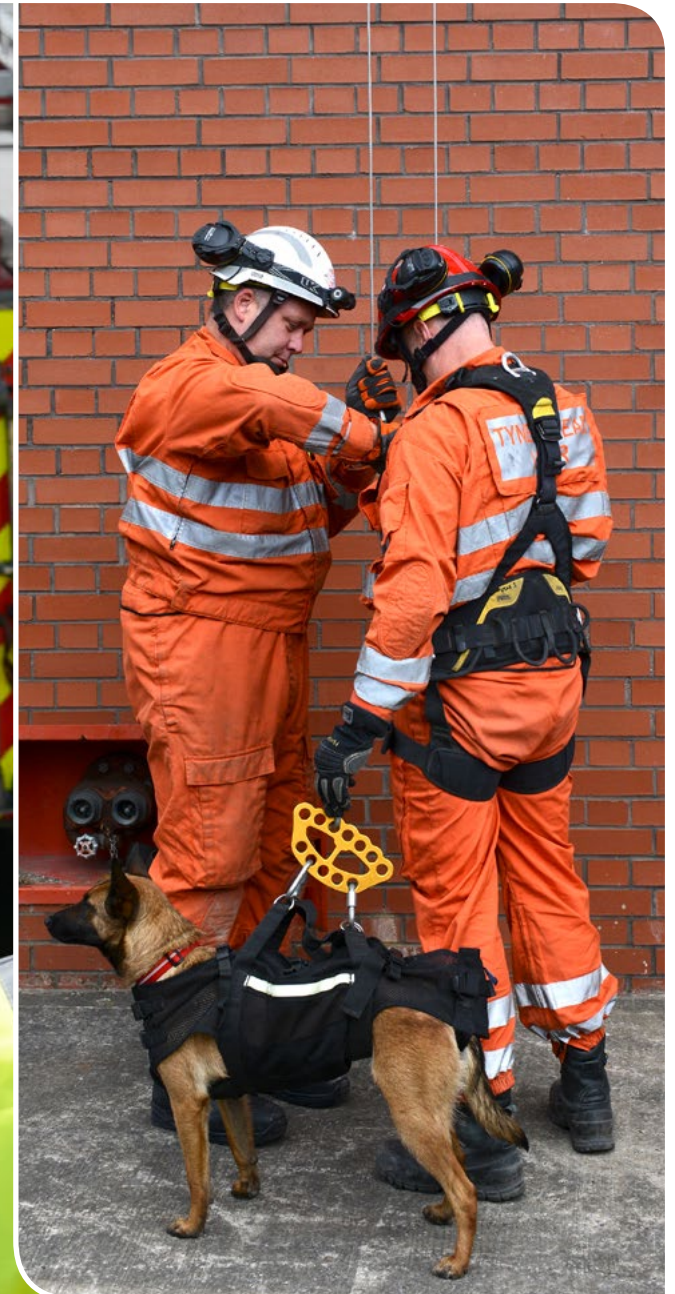
The chart below shows how our incidents are performing against our targets for 2018/19.

■ Forecast to not achieved target

■ Forecast within 2.5% of target

■ Forecast within target

indicator	indicator Description	Service		Newcastle		Sunderland		Gateshead		South Tyneside		North Tyneside	
		incidents	target	incidents	target	incidents	target	incidents	target	incidents	target	incidents	target
LI01	Number of deaths from accidental fires in dwellings	4	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
LI02	Number of deaths from all fires	5	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
LI03	Number of injuries from accidental fires in dwellings, excluding precautionary checks	47	36	9	10	12	9	6	9	12	1	8	7
LI05	Number of injuries from all fires	174	181	44	49	38	47	33	39	27	17	32	28
LI08	Number of accidental fires in dwellings	545	503	165	157	131	121	85	87	67	60	97	78
LI09	Number of accidental kitchen fires in dwellings	298	276	94	89	68	62	51	48	38	35	47	42
LI10	Number of accidental non kitchen fires in dwellings	247	227	71	68	63	59	34	39	29	25	50	36
LI50	Number of accidental fires in a non domestic property	156	158	57	58	43	35	16	35	15	13	25	17
LI16	Number of deliberate secondary fires	4852	4896	1529	1472	1536	1685	907	937	465	455	415	449
LI17	Number of deliberate primary fires attended	870	792	244	238	278	248	154	123	95	78	99	105
LI18	Number of deliberate refuse fires	3404	3636	1176	1222	1161	1207	548	625	253	287	266	295
LI21	Number of malicious false alarm calls attended	312	260	115	117	90	52	29	21	25	43	53	27
LI22	Number of false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms from non domestic premises	1717	1628	697	721	398	361	277	247	161	153	184	146
LI23	Number of false alarm calls due to automatic fire detection from domestic premises	2583	2609	1207	1288	477	452	416	373	227	211	256	285
LI24	Total number of fire calls attended	7579	7367	2352	2257	2258	2327	1378	1364	795	733	796	786
LI32	Total number of incidents (recorded at time of call)	17329	17273	5795	6219	4555	4536	3104	2976	1820	1756	2054	1886
LI29	Number of primary fires attended	1870	1730	537	536	549	468	311	296	207	186	266	244
LI35	Number of fires in a non domestic property	218	232	71	83	61	53	30	43	23	21	33	32



How we meet the requirements of the National Framework

We believe that this Statement of Assurance and Annual Report, along with other documents referred to and signposted within it, demonstrates how Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue meet the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, which sets out the government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. These are summarised over the following pages.



Requirement	How this is met
<p>Delivery of functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). • Have arrangements to prevent and mitigate the risks including working with Strategic Resilience Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We regularly produce a Strategic Community Safety Plan (SCSP), incorporating our IRMP. This includes our most recent SCSP 2017-20. • Our SCSP is supported by a Community Safety Strategy, Organisational Development Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). • We routinely conduct IRMP reviews, drawing on a strong evidence base (e.g. workload modelling, Mosaic data). • We produce and maintain a Community Risk Profile and use this to inform our strategy. • Our strategy is supported by clear policies and procedures. • Our performance is monitored by Performance Action Group (TWFRS staff) and Policy and Performance Committee (Fire Authority members) to ensure risk is being mitigated. • We raise awareness through ongoing Community Safety Education and Home Safety Check (HSC) programmes, and safety campaigns (e.g. Bonfire). • We work with businesses to reduce risk through our Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). • Our firefighters hold risk information and maps on their Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs), which helps them to respond to incidents effectively. • We ensure our staff are trained through our Learning and Organisational Development Policy, which has recently been updated. • Our Chief Fire Officer (CFO) is a member of the Strategic Resilience Board. • We contribute to our Local Resilience Forum (LRF), working with partners to reduce risk in our communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make provision for promoting fire safety, including fire prevention, and have a locally determined risk-based inspection programme. • Targeted at those at greatest risk, including businesses' economic risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our SCSP and supporting strategies sets out the activities we deliver to promote fire safety, including: • Delivery of HSCs and Safe and Well visits, which are targeted towards those at greatest risk • Our Volunteer Programme and network of Community Safety Advocates, who provide vital education and support to the community • Attendance at community events (e.g. Newcastle and Sunderland Pride, and Newcastle Mela) • Ongoing partnership working and data-sharing, including partner referrals into the Service where support is required • Safety campaigns and messages delivered via social media • An RBIP, working with local businesses to promote fire safety.

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where working to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public services, this should not be at the expense of the effective delivery of statutory core fire functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We ensure our core functions are delivered through our SCSP and supporting strategy. We seek to increase efficiency and effectiveness through, for example, data sharing, our Collaboration Strategy Board, the activities of our trading company, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Ltd, and co-location with other emergency services at our stations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess what the Fire Authority is aiming to achieve through prevention and protection activities, what type of intervention is most likely to achieve the aims and how best to measure and evaluate outcomes. Share good practice / learning from interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our prevention and protection activities are targeted towards where they are needed. For prevention, this includes an HSC procedure and Vulnerable Persons Policy. For protection, we operate an RBIP and participate in a Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) with eight National Partners including Sainsbury's, Home Group and Intu. Where necessary, we undertake Fire Investigations and Fire Safety Prosecutions. We are members of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Protection and Business Safety Group We evaluate our work through Post-Fire Audits, and evaluation of our community interventions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering the wide range of roles that personnel undertake, including with people with complex needs and vulnerabilities, ensure staff have appropriate skills and training. Safeguarding arrangements in place – including ensuring staff have appropriate vetting clearance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We ensure staff have the appropriate skills and training through our Organisational Development Strategy and Performance and Development Review (PDR) process. We also maintain a Watch Skills Profile. We seek Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) and Security Clearance for all necessary staff working with the community. We provide training on issues including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), safeguarding, equalities, and hoarding including at SafetyWorks! We ensure our work is informed by wider initiatives to support the most vulnerable in our communities (e.g. Dementia Friends, Dyslexia Advocates).

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies. • So far as is practicable, enter into reinforcement schemes, or mutual aid agreements, for securing mutual assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provide the necessary level of response to fires and other incidents, as set out in our SCSP (incorporating our IRMP). Our IRMP is reviewed regularly. • We have a strong mobilising system, supported by an Emergency Call Management Policy. • We make use of Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) to respond to lower risk incidents, so that we can prioritise the speed and weight of response to higher risk incidents. • We undertake training exercises with other emergency services (e.g. Exercise Border Reiver, Stephenson). • We have cross-border response arrangements with our neighbouring services and have negotiated common command arrangements with Northumberland FRS. • We collaborate extensively with NEAS and Northumbria Police in the interests of public safety. • We participate in the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) and National Resilience Advisory Team (NRAT) audits. • We have contingencies in place in the event of Industrial Action.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective business continuity arrangements in place. • Every endeavour to meet the full range of service delivery risks and national resilience duties and commitments that they face and not be developed on the basis of armed forces assistance being available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We maintain and test a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) across the Service. • We are compliant with ISO 22301, the international business continuity standard. This has been tested through internal audit. • Our resilience plans are developed and confirmed with the Home Office in the event of depleted resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory duty to keep collaboration opportunities under review; • Notify other emergency services of proposed collaborations that could be in the interests of their mutual efficiency or effectiveness; and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We participate in a Collaboration Joint Strategy Board and Joint Delivery Group with other emergency services. This is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). • We participate in the NCAF, and deploy national assets (e.g. Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and HVP as required). We have assisted other FRSs with wildfire and flooding incidents. • We have mutual aid agreements in place with neighbouring services and participate in our LRF. • As detailed above, we operate SafetyWorks! as a community facility, in partnership with a range of other organisations. • We have a Service Level Agreement with County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) regarding Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Training.

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give effect to a proposed collaboration where agreed it would be in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness and not have an adverse effect on public safety. • Collaborate with other Fire Authorities to deliver intraoperability and interoperability. • Collaborate with the National Resilience Lead Authority to ensure interoperability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed USAR training to be shared with our partners. • We participate in the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP). • We participate in joint procurement and recruitment exercises.
<h3>National Resilience</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the lead authority to support the national resilience assurance processes. • Includes for example devolved training and long-term capability management including via Strategic Resilience Board analysis of the National Risk Assessment. • Assess the risk of emergencies occurring to inform contingency planning. • Assess existing capability and identify any gaps as part of the IRMP process. • Proactively engage with, and support, NCAF arrangements including the NFCC's lead operational role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We maintain policies and and procedures relating to local and national risks. • We participate in NFCC groups relating to resilience. • We continue to develop our USAR team, including having trained our new USAR dog. • We have participated in NRAT multi-capability assurance inspections. • We maintain a multi-agency community risk register via our LRF. • We lead and participate in national and local exercises (e.g. Exercise Border Reiver, Stephenson)

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to respond to the threat of terrorism and ready to respond to incidents in own communities and across England. • Be interoperable to provide operational support across the UK to terrorist events. • Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) capability • Work collectively and with the Strategic Resilience Board and the national resilience lead authority to provide assurance to government that resilience capabilities are fit for purpose and risks and plans are assessed and any gaps identified. • Work with police forces and ambulance trusts to provide tri-service assurance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We participate in the NCAF and Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) • Our ability to respond to the threat of terrorism is overseen by our dedicated Resilience team, who lead our participation in national and local exercises (e.g. Exercise Border Reiver, Stephenson) • We employ a Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Advisor. • Our CFO is a member of the Strategic Resilience Board. • We have trained National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILOs) and run a NILO course in collaboration with Northumbria Police and North East Ambulance Service (NEAS). • We participate in our LRF.
<h3>Governance</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) has a statutory duty to ensure provision of their core functions. • Each FRA will appoint an individual – commonly known as a CFO – who has responsibility for managing the FRS. • Each FRA must hold this person to account for the exercise of their functions and the functions of persons under their direction and control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our FRA ensures we can serve our communities through our SCSP and supporting strategies – the Community Safety Strategy, Organisational Development Strategy and MFTS. • Our SCSP includes our IRMP, which is reviewed and consulted on regularly. • Our CFO has overall responsibility for managing our FRS, supported by two Assistant Chief Officers (ACOs).

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CFO must, in exercising their functions, have regard to the FRA's IRMP and SCSP. • The FRA should give due regard to the professional advice of the CFO while developing the IRMP and when making decisions affecting the FRS. • The FRA must produce an IRMP covering at least 3 years reflect effective consultation and be published, annual Statement of Assurance, Financial Plans including medium-term financial strategy, efficiency plan and reserves strategy which can be combined or published separately. • The FRS should consult the NFCC for advice and support when developing improvement plans, particularly in response to inspections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We review our performance against the requirements of the National Framework as part of our SOAAR and annual Corporate Governance Review. • Our CFO is Chair of the NFCC Operations Coordination Committee and our staff are members of multiple NFCC committees and groups.
<p>Value for money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review the numbers and deployment of firefighters and other staff to ensure the workforce is commensurate with the risks faced. • Financial decisions are taken with the advice and guidance of the chief finance officer and decisions are taken with an emphasis on delivering value for money. • Ensure management of finances is undertaken with regard to published guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We regularly consider our resources relative to risk through our IRMP, which is subject to regular review and supported by data. • We consider value for money in all aspects of our work, including workforce planning, budget monitoring and business cases. • We proactively address feedback arising from internal and external audit. • We manage our finances with regard to published guidance, and make this information available via our Statement of Assurance and Annual Report (SOAAR), MTFS, Efficiency Plan and Reserves Policy.

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTFS should include funding and spending plans for revenue and capital, take into account multiple years, the inter-dependencies of revenue budgets and capital investments, the role of reserves and the consideration of risks. • MTFS to have regard to affordability and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance, and be aligned with the IRMP. • Publish an Efficiency Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a published MTFS and Efficiency Plan, which is aligned to our IRMP and reported regularly to Fire Authority Members. • We report regularly to Fire Authority on our capital and revenue programme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a Reserves Policy. • Reserves strategy should include details of current and future planned reserve levels, setting out a total amount of reserves and the amount of each specific reserve that is held for each year. • The reserves strategy should cover resource and capital reserves and provide information for the period of the medium term financial plan (and at least two years ahead). • The strategy should include how the level of the general reserve has been set, justification for holding a general reserve larger than five percent of budget and details of the activities or items to be funded from each earmarked reserve, and how these support the FRA's strategy. • Provide clarity on how much funding falls into planned expenditure in MTFS, specific projects beyond MTFS and general contingency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Reserves Policy is published and available on our website. This includes all elements set out in the National Framework. • Our Reserves Policy references key documents including our Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the reports of internal and external auditors. • We take account of our Reserves Policy in all aspects of our financial planning, including our Budget Planning Framework and four-year Efficiency Plan.

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve commercial practices including whether to aggregate procurement with other FRS or local services to improve efficiency. • Demonstrate and support national and local commercial transformation programmes where appropriate. • Demonstrate full awareness of the objectives to standardise requirements, aggregate demand and manage suppliers of products and services within their commercial arrangements. • Ensure that their commercial activities, be that the placement of new contracts or the use of existing contracts, is in line with their legal obligations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We participate in national procurement frameworks, and in 2018/19 drove procurement efficiencies of 70%. • We now include Non-Private Financial Initiative (PFI) funding on our framework agreements. • Our CFO now personally signs off all single supplier justifications to ensure value for money.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with national research and development programmes, including those overseen by the NFCC, unless there is a good reason not to. • Where embark on research and development outside of any national programme, processes should be put in place to ensure it meets quality standards and, where possible and appropriate, is available to the sector to enable good practice to be shared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We engage in national and research development programmes, including providing staff time to participate in NFCC initiatives.

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A trading company is a separate legal entity and elected members and officers should at all times be aware of potential conflicts of interest when carrying out their roles for their authorities, or when acting as directors of trading companies. • Ensure any actions taken in respect of trading companies are considered against the requirements of competition law. • Financial assistance – in cash or in kind – given by an authority that establishes or participates in it, should be for a limited period, set against the expectation of later returns, and re-paid by those returns. • Any assistance should be provided under a formal agreement with the company and must be entered into for a commercial purpose. Before entering into such an agreement, the authority should satisfy itself that it will achieve its objective, and the company should satisfy itself that it will meet its objective in terms of its business plan. • The parties should consider any State Aid implications and obtain their own expert advice where necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our trading company, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Ltd (TWFRS Ltd), is compliant with all aspects of company law and a constitution is agreed. • TWFRS Ltd Directors have specified roles. • Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (TWFRA) holds shares, although no dividends have been paid. • We observe all State Aid regulations.

Requirement	How this is met
<p>Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have in place a people strategy that has been designed in collaboration with the workforce and take into account the principles set out in the NFCC's People Strategy. • It should cover improving the diversity of the workforce, equality, cultural values and behaviours, recruitment, retention and progression; flexible working; professionalism, skills and leadership; training; health and safety, wellbeing, disabilities and support; and tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our commitment to workforce development is set out in our Organisational Development Strategy, which supports the principles and priorities of the NFCC's People Strategy. • We have worked with the workforce to develop a Leadership Bond, which sets out our shared values and behaviours as a Service. • We run a Service-wide development programme, Engage, and offer training opportunities to all staff. • We regularly run an Employee Survey to understand and respond to the views of our staff. • We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. This is evidenced through our Inclusive Top 50 Employers Award and inclusion in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the approved professional standards that result from the national work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are participating in a pilot of the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) examinations. • We are working closely with the Fire Standards Board to support them in developing a new set of professional standards for the sector.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a process of fitness assessment and development to ensure that operational personnel are enabled to maintain the standards of personal fitness required in order to perform their role safely. • Ensure that no individual will automatically face dismissal if they fall below the standards required and cannot be deployed operationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Occupational Health Unit (OHU) and Learning and Organisational Development Team provide support to all staff. • For operational staff, this includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Time to undertake physical training on a daily basis when at work, including – The Chester Treadmill Test, a fitness assessment that takes place every six months – Annual health monitoring by the Occupational Health Unit and associated fitness support/bespoke programmes – Routine Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) assessment – Access to a vaccination programme.

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all operational personnel will be provided with support to maintain their levels of fitness for the duration of their career. • Consider where operational personnel have fallen below the fitness standards required whether an individual is able to continue on full operational duties or should be stood down, taking into account the advice provided by the FRA's occupational health provider. In making this decision, the safety and well-being of the individual will be the key issue. • Commit to providing a minimum of 6 months of development and support to enable individuals who have fallen below the required fitness standards to regain the necessary levels of fitness. • Refer an individual to occupational health where underlying medical reasons are identified that restrict/prevent someone from achieving the necessary fitness; and ensure that individual receives the necessary support to facilitate a return to operational duties. • Fully explore opportunities to enable the individual to remain in employment including through reasonable adjustment and redeployment in role where it appears the medical condition does not allow a return to operational duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Access to an independent qualified medical practitioner – Access to advice from a dedicated Occupational Health Advisor – Access to support from our Welfare Manager – Referral to physiotherapy or other specialist occupational health advisor when required. – Monthly health education promotions, including stress awareness – Access to gym facilities at all stations and at headquarters • We participate in a range of mental health initiatives, including Promoting Positive Mental Health, the Blue Light Time to Change programme, and work with Mind. • We provide all reasonable adjustments and redeployment where necessary to ensure that staff can remain in employment. Recommendations can be made by OHU to assist in this process with regards to capability and reasonable adjustments. • We report annually on health and fitness data, and have written policies and procedures to support our approach.

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not re-appoint principal fire officers after retirement to their previous, or a similar, post save for in exceptional circumstances when such a decision is necessary in the interests of public safety. • In the exceptional circumstance that a re-appointment is necessary in the interests of public safety, this decision should be subject to agreement by a public vote of the elected members of the FRS, or a publicised decision by the appropriate elected representative of the FRA. • All principal fire officer posts must be open to competition nationally, and FRAs must take account of this in their workforce planning. • While the above requirements only extend to principal fire officers, we expect FRAs to have regard to this principle when re-appointing at any level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No principal fire officers have been reappointed following retirement. • Recruitment for CFO, ACO and Area Manager posts is open to national competition. • Recruitment campaigns are delivered jointly with CDDFRS and Northumberland FRS (NFRS).

Requirement	How this is met
<p>Inspection Intervention and Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with the inspectorate and its inspectors to enable them to deliver their statutory function. This includes providing relevant data and information to inform inspections. FRAs must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS and if recommendations are made, prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned. If the FRA does not propose to undertake any action as a result of a recommendation, reasons for this should be given. When forming an action plan, the FRA could seek advice and support from other organisations, for example, the National Fire Chiefs Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We supported Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) data requests. We proactively engaged with HMICFRS Discovery Week and Fieldwork Week as part of the inspection process. This included close working with the Service Liaison Lead and Inspectorate to make all required information available. We seconded three staff (Inspection Support Team) to co-ordinate inspection planning, and support development of an HMICFRS Improvement Plan. We implemented an internal communications plan to prepare the Service for inspection. We supported the regional sharing of information by hosting meetings with our neighbouring services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have governance and accountability arrangements in place covering issues such as financial management and transparency, complaints and discipline arrangements, and compliance with the seven principles of public life. Each FRA must hold the individual who has responsibility for managing the fire and rescue service – an operational or non-operational CFO – to account for the delivery of the fire and rescue service and the functions of persons under their direction and control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a CFO supported by two ACOs. We have robust governance arrangements, overseen by Fire Authority, Governance Committee and Policy and Performance Committee. Our governance arrangements are reviewed annually in line with CIPFA principles, and we produce an annual SOAAR. We have a clear Publication Scheme, providing information to the public via our website. We publish our accounts annually, which have the unqualified opinion of our external auditors and an X Value for Money conclusion. We seek the views of members of the public, including significant consultation on our IRMP proposals and an After the Incident Survey. We also share information and welcome feedback via social media.

Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In demonstrating their accountability to communities for the service they provide, fire and rescue authorities need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – be transparent and accountable to their communities for their decisions and actions; – provide the opportunity for communities to help to plan their local service through effective consultation and involvement; and – have scrutiny arrangements in place that reflect the high standard communities expect for an important public safety service. • Must comply with their statutory transparency requirements. • Publish certain information, including: senior salaries; register of interests; staffing; income and expenditure; property; rights and liabilities; and decisions of significant public interest. • Make communities aware of how they can access data and information on their performance. • Submit to the Secretary of State any reports and returns that are required; and • Give the Secretary of State any information with respect to its functions that are required. • FRAs have a responsibility to provide regular data to the Home Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We engage with members of the public at community events, including Newcastle and Sunderland Pride and the Newcastle Mela. • We invite comment, compliments and complaints, and respond to all complaints within 28 days. • We comply with all aspects of the Data Transparency Code and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Publication Scheme. • We publish our Peer Review Action Plans, Freedom of Information (FOI) enquiries and consultation feedback. • We report on our performance through our SOAAR, which has been produced annually since 2013. • In May 2018, we implemented the new General Data Protection Regulations 2018. • We produce quarterly performance reports, benchmarked against other metropolitan FRs. • We maintain policies and procedures relating to data and information governance. • We provide data returns as required to the Home Office and HMICFRS.



Governance arrangements

We are a local government organisation created under the Local Government Act 1985 to oversee the activities of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).

We have statutory responsibilities laid down in legislation including the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Local Government Act 1999, Localism Act 2011 and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018, to provide an effective, economic and efficient fire and rescue service.

Our Fire Authority comprises 16 elected members, nominated by the five constituent councils of Tyne and Wear.

There is also representation from the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner.

To enable us to carry out our duties effectively, we have a number of committees that include:

- Human Resources Committee
- Policy and Performance Committee
- Governance Committee
- Appointments Committee
- Disciplinary Appeals Committee
- Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee
- Emergency Sub-Committee

The roles and responsibilities of all members and officers are clearly defined and documented, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication:

- Standing orders and financial regulations are in place that set out how our Fire Authority operates and how decisions are made, including a clear Delegation Scheme.
- The Standing Orders and Delegation Scheme indicates responsibilities for functions and sets out how decisions are made.
- A system of scrutiny is in place whereby the Governance Committee provides independent scrutiny of the Fire Authority's financial and non-financial position to the extent that it affects the Fire Authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment; and the Policy and Performance Committee scrutinises performance information in respect of the Fire Authority's duty to secure best value and to consider policy initiatives in respect of emerging issues.

For further information regarding our Fire Authority, please visit our website: www.twfire.gov.uk

Governance Framework

We have a Corporate Governance Framework which ensures we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

We are responsible for ensuring we conduct our business in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used appropriately.

We have a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way we function, with particular regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

As part of this liability, we are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of our affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of our functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

The Corporate Governance Framework primarily includes systems and processes which we use to direct and control our activities and engagement with the community. It also enables us to monitor the achievement of our strategic objectives and to consider whether these objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level.

It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of our policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

We adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance in 2003 which was revised and updated in 2018/19 and is reviewed annually. The Code ensures that we comply with recommended practice and maintain high standards of conduct.

The framework is based upon the following seven core Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) principles:

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of our intended outcomes
- Developing our capacity, including the capability of its leadership and individuals in it

- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Review of Effectiveness

Annually, we are responsible for conducting a review of the effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by feedback from Members and the work of all senior managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit Annual Report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

Our Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 based on the annual review of effectiveness, was agreed by the Fire Authority on 10th June 2019. The papers include:

- Annual Governance Review report
- Local Code of Corporate Governance
- Annual Governance Statement 2018/19
- Action plan

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Our Fire Authority adheres to the Department for Communities and Local Government's 'Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity'.

The code became effective in March 2011 and provides guidance on the content, style, distribution and cost of local authority publicity.

In 2014 compliance with the code became statutory as part of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The Fire Authority's communications policies abide by the code.

Data Transparency Code of Practice

We have an effective publication scheme which increases democratic accountability and helps local people to influence the delivery of our services.

Management of Corporate Risk

Our risk management approach ensures the successful delivery of our corporate goals through the effective management of risks by identifying, prioritising, controlling and monitoring threats to ensure they are eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level.

The key objectives that underpin our risk management policy are to:

- Develop, implement and review our risk management framework and process
- Promote effective risk management at all levels of the organisation.
- Encourage an appropriate risk across TWFRS.

The Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) is essential to the effectiveness of this process. The group is chaired by the Chair of the Fire Authority and attended by Executive leadership team members. The group develop strategy to manage risks within in the Corporate Risk Profile and develop, implement, monitor and review action plans to minimise corporate strategic risks.

At the time of publication of the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report, the five corporate risks were:

- risk that financial pressures will impact on Service's decision making and delivery of its goals/priorities and objectives
- failure to effectively and safely deploy and manage operational employees and resources at incidents leading to employees and public being exposed to unnecessary risk

- risk that spending and or policy decisions of one of our partners has a negative impact on the sustainability of collaborative work and therefore a detrimental impact on the communities we serve.
- industrial unrest nationally and / or locally with regard to conditions of service (including ongoing organisational change management programmes) results in industrial action and impacts on service delivery
- risk that findings of national events / incidents may result in significant changes to legislation, with resultant impact on Service policies, procedures and resource requirement.

Brexit

The Service's Corporate Risk Management Group actively monitors and reviews strategic risks e.g. Brexit No Deal. Working in collaboration with Northumbria LRF robust planning activities remain ongoing to prepare for a Brexit No Deal scenario and ensure any adverse impact is minimised.

Fair processing / privacy notice

We are committed to protecting your personal data and privacy.

We recognise that ensuring the accuracy and security of your personal data is essential to retaining your confidence and trust. The information you provide to us will only be used for the purposes that you provide it.

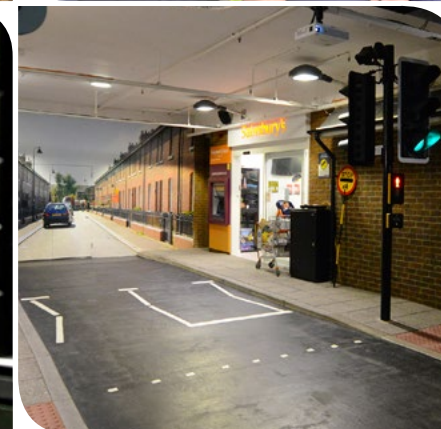
This privacy notice was last updated in November 2018 and a full copy of this can be found at the following link: <https://www.twfire.gov.uk/about-us/access-to-information/your-data/>



Financial information

Finance Officer's Statement

The Authority's Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practice, as set out in The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) / Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/2019 ('the Code'). This summarised version of the Accounts aims to provide easy to understand information, focusing on the key points arising from our stewardship of public funds in 2018/2019.



Financial Management and Performance 2018/2019

Revenue Expenditure and Income Summary

The estimated net revenue expenditure for 2018/2019 to be met from Government Grants and local taxpayers was approved by the Authority at £48.096m. The following table summarises the financial position for the year:

*The Net Budget of £48.359m is adjusted for additional section 31 grant received.

**The 'Net Operating Expenditure' includes actuarial pension valuations required under accounting standards which has resulted in a large variation in year. However, this has a neutral impact on the accounts, adjusted through a transfer from the Pension Reserve.

	2018 / 2019 £'000
Community Safety	3,912
Fire Fighting and Rescue Operations	22,669
Corporate and Democratic Core	209
Non Distributed Costs	-48
Exceptional Items - Pensions Past Service Cost	37,240
Net Cost of Services	63,982
Other Operating Income and Expenditure	24,687
Net Operating Expenditure**	88,669
Capital Financing	-1,143
Transfer from Pension Reserve**	-42,404
Net Transfer to Reserves	3,237
Net Budget	48,359
Financed by:	
Revenue Support Grant and General Grants	-9,620
Top Up Grant	-11,031
Business Rates and Collection Fund	-4,589
Council Tax Precepts and Collection Fund	-23,119
Total Resources*	-48,359
Increase/Decrease in General Fund Balance in the year	0
Opening General Fund Balance	-3,943
Closing General Fund Balance	-3,943

The Revenue Budget Outturn for 2018/2019 showed a net overall underspend of £1.288m, at £46.808m compared with an original budget of £48.096m. This was reported to a meeting of the Fire Authority in June 2019. During the year the Authority has made a positive drive to achieve this level of savings with a number of significant initiatives:

- Improved financial management throughout, with increased financial awareness and tighter budgetary control, has achieved savings of £0.225m across the full service;
- A review of insurance services provided by the Lead Authority and a new approach adopted whereby all policies are separately tendered to ensure best value, has led to a significant year-end saving on premiums of £0.154m;
- A move to reducing the number of firefighters from five to four on all appliances, phased in from 1st January 2018 and completed in June 2018, has made in year budget savings in line with expectations. This measure has also had a positive impact on helping to reduce overtime;
- Overtime costs have been significantly reduced during the year largely due to proactive management actions such as swap a shift (optimum staffing pilot), balancing leave groups, and establishing a temporary operational resource planner post within the staffing team. In addition, the 23 trainees now operational on fire stations have contributed to the reduction in requirements for overtime during the last quarter of the financial year;

- All aspects of the Authority's finances have now been reviewed and a more commercially based approach to income generation has been carefully and sensibly applied where appropriate, to ensure Best Value is achieved for the Authority. Increases in income above budget during the year help to show this is continuing to bear fruit and income generation is expected to increase in future years as a result of this new impetus; and
- A review of the property portfolio by Finance and Estates has identified a number of surplus assets which are being actively progressed with a view to either generating a much needed capital receipt or, where appropriate, a sustainable income stream to the Authority. Some of these disposals are nearing completion and revenue budget savings have been identified as a result.

The main variations are detailed below for information:

- Employee costs – a net underspend of £1.472m. Savings have been made from a significantly greater number of operational staff retirements than anticipated and reduced employer pension costs;
- Premises – an overspend of £0.012m on utility budgets across the estate from higher bills than estimated and rate increases from phased rate revaluations impacting in 2018/2019;
- Transport – an underspend of £0.118m through savings on transport costs due to revised travel arrangements and lower transport insurance premiums;

- Supplies and Services – an underspend of £0.212m on supplies and services due to continued prudent spend across a number of areas. Subsistence costs continue to reduce following the implementation of revised policies and practices and an overspend on equipment maintenance and repair has been met by savings elsewhere in the revenue budget;
- Contingencies – an underspend of £0.734m as some budget set aside has not been required, mainly due to the operational service delivery actions, the successful completion of riding four on all appliances, and the recruitment of the 23 new firefighters reducing the call on overtime costs;
- Support Services and Recharges – a net underspend of £0.027m after changes made to the service level agreement with the Lead Authority once the budget had been set;
- Income – a net overachievement of £0.291m, largely due to one-off sales of vehicles and equipment, additional income for the Princes Trust Team programme, increased income from Primary Authority Scheme and COMAH activity, Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project (ESMCP) transitional funding received late in the year, and additional rental income, partially offset by a reduction in the course and conference income;
- Interest received - £0.086m over budget as increases to cash flow levels has resulted in more interest received on the Authority's cash working balances;

- Capital Financing – an underspend of £0.111m from savings on debt charges; and
- Reserves and Provisions Appropriations - £1.751m decrease predominantly due to underspends against budget reducing the need to draw from Reserves in year, along with agreed appropriations in to the Revenue Budget Carry Forward Reserve for known future requirements.

Members agreed to appropriate the surplus funds to earmarked reserves at a meeting of the Fire Authority in June to fund temporarily the budget gap over the medium term while longer-term efficiency savings are made.

Balance Sheet Position

The balance sheet shows the value at the balance sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Authority. The net assets of the Authority (assets less liabilities) are matched by reserves held by the Authority. The table, right, summarises the balance sheet position.

The Authority is a going concern due to the fact that, whilst recognising that it has a negative net worth of £871.787m on its Balance Sheet, most of the 'deficit' relates to the pensions deficiency of £951.055m which must be disclosed as part of the international financial reporting standard IAS19 (Accounting for Pensions) requirements.

The fact that all pension costs would never be incurred in one year (as implied by IAS19), and that the Authority is addressing this potential deficiency over a 21 year period in accordance with pension regulatory requirements by making additional annual pension deficiency payments, means the Balance Sheet Net Worth is effectively being distorted by this reporting standard.

If this element is removed, the Authority has a 'real' net worth of £79.268m. The Authority also has assets worth £79.436m and cash backed reserves of £31.993m, which support the view that the Authority's Balance Sheet and finances are in fact healthier than implied by the published accounts.

	31 March 2019 £'000
Buildings, land and other assets owned by Authority	79,436
Short-term investments	33,646
Money owed to the Authority - (debtors)	11,715
Money owed by the Authority - (creditors / borrowing)	-995,875
Provisions	-709
Net Assets / (Liabilities)	-871,787
Revaluation reserve and Capital Adjustment account	47,265
Pension reserve	-951,055
Other unusable reserves	10
Earmarked reserves	25,038
Capital reserves	3,012
General Fund Balance	3,943
Total Reserves	-871,787

Capital Expenditure

The Fire Authority spent £1.205m on capital schemes during 2018/2019. The main schemes were:

	£'000
Equipment	1,003
Property Improvements	154
Vehicles	48
	1,205
Financed by:	
Revenue Contribution to Capital	505
Grants / Capital Contributions	243
Earmarked reserves	457
	1,205

Auditors Findings

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Annual accounts submitted for audit on time					
Unqualified audit opinion *					

* An unqualified opinion by the Authority's external auditors means that in the auditor's opinion, the accounts presented fairly the financial position of the Fire Authority.

In addition to the unqualified audit opinion, the Auditors issued an unqualified Value for Money Conclusion, which confirms that we have proper arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in our use of resources.

The external auditors Annual Audit Letter is expected to be received in September 2019 and will confirm the above.

Financial Planning

The Authority's 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 resources to address 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.

The current MTFS covering the period 2019/2020 to 2022/2023, using the government's funding projections, shows that the Authority is facing an increased budget gap of £4.088m.

In light of this position and the anticipated prolonged funding reductions over the next four years, the Authority's has decided to earmark reserves to temporarily help support the budget over the medium term until it can implement its actions set out in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). This is considered a prudent measure and will now be necessary on a continuing basis.



Protecting our environment

In 2018/19, we have implemented the following actions to help protect our environment:

In 2018/19, we have implemented the following actions to help protect our environment:

- We are in the process of delivering the findings of an independent Stock Condition Survey, this will result in the installation of a new energy efficient heating system at West Denton Community Fire Station
- We are in the process of a complete overhaul of our Building Energy Management system, this will result in efficiencies and reductions in our utilities (gas, water & electricity) usage.
- We are in the process of introducing 'Eco Printing Paper' across all our locations, this paper is 100% eco-responsible, 100% sustainable and non bleached.
- A review of our laundry provision has resulted in a substantial reduction in the allocation of laundry to our Community Fire Stations, with the resulting benefit of fewer items requiring professional laundering.
- We no longer use single use plastic or polystyrene cups, these have been replaced primarily with glasses and/or biodegradable cups.
- Our Catering Department have introduced 100% recyclable packing for sandwiches.

- We have adopted a bulk buying approach to consumable items (cleaning products etc.). All locations have been issued with refill bottles to reduce cost and packaging.

- Our PFI partners continue to invest in LED lighting and the installation of energy efficient heating systems.

Electric Vehicles

We have introduced two additional Nissan e-NV200 electric vans which are fully electric and have a range of 85miles. They can be charged from any household socket or by the rapid chargers installed at our headquarters and Technical Services Centre. The vehicles can be charged to 80% capacity within 30 minutes.



Your views count

Your views are very important to us and having had the opportunity to read our Statement of Assurance and Annual Report, we would welcome any comments that you may have. This would assist in our consultation process and evaluation of the document.

Complaints and compliments

We aim to provide the highest standards of fire, rescue and community safety services. As a recipient of a public service, there may be times when you wish to comment on our service.

We encourage everyone in our communities to share any complaints and compliments with us, as we value your opinion and it can also help us to continually improve our service.

Complaints Procedure

For our part, if you do make a complaint we will ensure that:

- Your complaint is treated confidentially
- You receive an acknowledgement within 7 working days, including the name of the Investigating Officer
- Your complaint is investigated in accordance with the Fire and Rescue Service's standard procedures.

We will also:

- Endeavour to send you a full reply including the results of the investigation within 28 working days
- Ensure that you are informed of the progress, if the above deadline cannot be met.

Making a complaint or compliment

If you wish to make a complaint or would like to tell us about an area of our work that you have been happy with then please contact us, details are as follows:

Complete an online form via our website:
www.twfire.gov.uk

In writing, address your letter to:
The Chief Fire Officer and send to:

**Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Nissan Way
Barmston Mere
Sunderland
SR5 3QY**

Telephone **0191 4441500**
E-mail **Exec.Support@twfire.gov.uk**
Internet **<http://www.twfire.gov.uk/>**

Alternative formats

We understand that people have different needs. This plan is available in alternative formats upon request. For further details contact **0191 444 1500**.



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