



**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Authority**

Creating the Safest Community



Statement of Assurance and Annual Report

2019-2020

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Foreword

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (“the Authority”) remain committed to our vision of ‘Creating the Safest Community’ and are fortunate to have passionate, dedicated, and highly trained employees, whose clear motivation is the protection and safety of our communities across Tyne and Wear. Our successes and achievements, particularly in times of unprecedented challenge, have been made possible because of this commitment, and strong leadership throughout the Service.

Our commitment to delivering a first class fire and rescue service remains at the fore of everything we do and it is our intention to continue to adapt and be innovative in addressing the changing needs we face, and to work with our valued partners and the community to achieve our vision and deliver a service we are proud of.

Our clear vision and priorities set direction for the Service, and help us to measure performance and ensure we deliver on financial, governance and operational arrangements and show due regard to the expectations set out in our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

As a high performing fire and rescue service, judged by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as ‘Good’ across all three pillars of inspection, we work hard to ensure a high standard and continuous improvement of the services we provide.

The Authority is accountable for its performance and are open to evaluation by the communities they serve. By producing this Statement of Assurance Annual Report (SOAAR), we aim to provide information to communities, government, local authorities and other partners which will allow them to make a valid assessment of our performance for 2019/20.

As Chair of the Authority and Chief Fire Officer of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, we are satisfied that during 2019/20 our business has been conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

Additionally, we are satisfied that the Authority has done everything within its power to comply with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018, which sets out the Government’s priorities and objectives for all fire and rescue authorities. To ensure the Authority can demonstrate how it complies with its statutory duties and the Framework a number of detailed assessments have been undertaken and are detailed within this document.



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

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Chris Lowther
*Chief Fire Officer
and Chief Executive*

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Introduction

To provide an effective and efficient fire and rescue service we have statutory responsibilities to carry out our functions within a defined statutory framework.

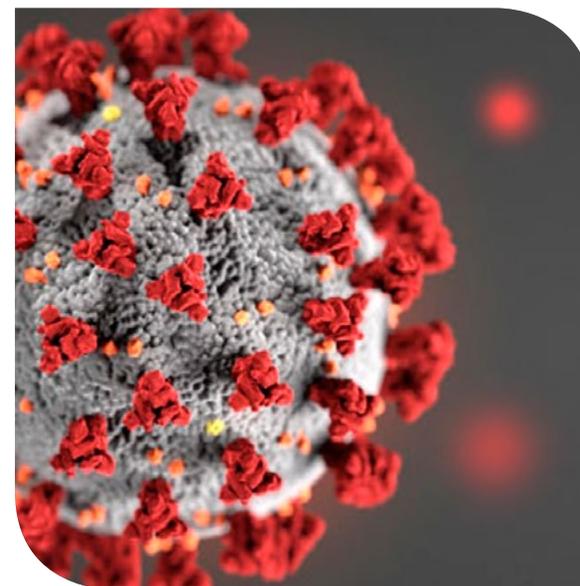
The key legislation defining these requirements include:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Local Government Act 1999
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- Localism Act 2011
- Policing and Crime Act 2017
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018

COVID-19 Pandemic

As a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, towards the end of 2019/20, the Government introduced a number of measures to curb the transmission of the virus which included restrictions and a national lockdown. As a result of these measures we implemented our robust business continuity plans and adapted our ways of working to protect our staff whilst continuing to deliver our statutory functions.

Our staff adapted to new ways of working to engage with, and provide information, advice and guidance to residents and local businesses, which included using technology to enhance interactions.



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Services to our community

Every day we ensure the safety of 1.1 million people across Tyne and Wear and are proud to serve the communities of Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland 365 days a year.

We do this by responding quickly and efficiently to emergencies, but also by preventing emergencies from happening in the first place.

To achieve this, we need to understand the communities we serve and the places they live and work.

Like most public sector organisations, our resources are limited which is why it is essential to use effective targeting and attain an evidence-based understanding of our communities and the risks they face.



Our Vision

Creating the Safest Community

Our Mission

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

'Creating the Safest Community' helps us to meet the needs of our communities every day, ensuring their safety from fires and other emergencies.

Our team of dedicated staff and volunteers adhere to a set of core values that emphasise fairness and respect for others. All of our employees have a responsibility to uphold these core values:

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.

In line with [our mission, vision and values](#), we keep residents safe through the development of:

Our **Strategic Community Safety Plan (SCSP)** which sets our overarching approach to serving the communities of Tyne and Wear and incorporates our **Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)**. Our IRMP is a statutory requirement that helps us to target our resources where they're needed most.

We regularly review our emergency response, how we collaborate with partners and our ways of working. We [consult with the public](#) and carry out impact assessments to weigh up the benefits of potential cost savings against the risks.

The SCSP is underpinned by three strategies:

Organisational Development Strategy

Demonstrates our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It sets out how we can all work together to lead our people, promote continuous improvement of the Service and improve outcomes for our staff and communities.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

Ensures we have the financial resources required for our planned improvements, reflects the need to create efficiencies by exploring new ways of delivering our services and includes both capital and revenue spend and income.

Community Safety Strategy

Explains how we will shape services and target resources to achieve better outcomes for the community. This strategy is informed by our Community Risk Profile (CRP) which provides a comprehensive and forward looking assessment of the risks in our community. The Community Safety Strategy sets a clear vision for activities including:

- **Preventing:** 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.
- **Protecting:** 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.
- **Responding:** We respond quickly and effectively to fire and rescue incidents to reduce the loss of life, injuries and damage to property.
- **Resilience:** We help 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.

We set targets to enable us to monitor our performance enabling us to achieve our vision of **'Creating the Safest Community'**. By monitoring our performance we are able to see how we are progressing towards achieving our strategic goals.

Further details about our strategies can be reviewed on our [website](#).



We shape our services to better target resources in order to achieve positive outcomes for the communities we serve. We undertake this through prevention, protection, response, resilience and collaboration activities with partners.

Prevention

We believe Prevention and Education (P&E) 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 CRP 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 P&E teams work to educate people about how they can protect themselves from fire. In 2019/20, we achieved this in the following ways:

- We delivered over 26,000 **Home Safety Checks** (HSC's), providing tailored home fire safety advice and fitting over 19,000 smoke alarms – an increase of 4,000 alarms fitted, compared to the previous year. Our HSCs 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.
 - Over 13,000 people visited our interactive safety centre, **SafetyWorks!** At the centre we deliver key safety campaigns with the aim of improving safety and reducing accidents, as well as reducing the impact of deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour. Sessions are tailored to the needs of the visiting group and information provided is up to date and reflects current and emerging issues in our society. Safetyworks! is a multi-agency centre managed by our Service, with the support of the Northumbria Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (PCC), Nexus, Sainsbury's, Local Authority Road Safety Teams and the Royal National Lifeboats Institution (RNLI).
 - 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 media and education campaigns to increase awareness of fire safety. During our 2019 bonfire campaign, we achieved a reduction in deliberate fires of over one-quarter (28.2%) over a six-week period. We had contact with 68 secondary schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) delivering to over 5,000 students – including the use of an educational film 'Sparks in the Park' produced by the Service to educate young people on the dangers of fireworks.
- In partnership with burns nurses from the Grafters Club based at the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) in Newcastle, P&E staff delivered sessions highlighting the impact of burns at the PRUs, which was an effective collaboration for a high impact delivery of the message. SafetyWorks! also delivered targeted education sessions to 18 Special Educational Needs schools, engaging with 312 students.

- Since its launch, we have received 18 reports from **Firestoppers**, resulting in a variety of actions. Intelligence has been passed to Northumbria Police and local authority partners for further investigation, resulting in legal action on three occasions. Deliberate secondary fires have reduced across Tyne and Wear by 10% compared to the previous year and although this cannot be attributed to any one factor, the promotion of Firestoppers alongside numerous other deliberate fire reduction initiatives such as the refuse uplift pilot should not be overlooked.
- The **Sunderland Community Hub (SCH)** was established for members of the community to engage in activities, primarily based around boxing. Youth engagement, increased self-esteem and motivational skills were identified as genuine drivers for partners to invest their time in. The project aims to achieve contact with young people who are historically difficult to engage with through established frameworks. As part of their early intervention and crime reduction strategies, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and partners refer youngsters to the SCH. The success of the SCH led to the establishment of the Newcastle Community Hub with initial funding provided by the PCC.

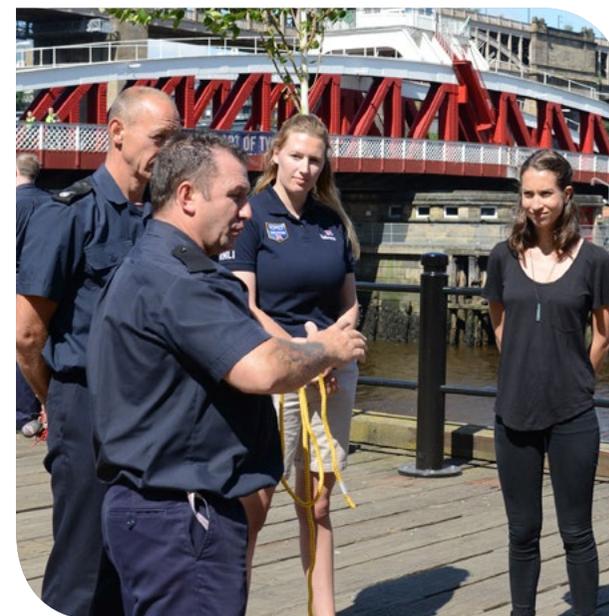
- Our highly skilled **Community Engagement** staff and Community Volunteers come from a variety of diverse backgrounds. This year we have been using their community knowledge and actively reaching out to offer support to various community groups. We have supported a number of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes, and provided fire safety information to those in attendance at the classes. We have also used social media videos to share cultural messages and valued fire safety information, including cooking safely whilst wearing loose clothing in English, Arabic, and Punjabi languages.
- Our **Prince's Trust Team Programme** supports unemployed young people aged 16-25 into employment, training, education or volunteering. We reached 102 young people across our three venues in Newcastle and Sunderland. The young people improved their confidence and employability by engaging in projects to improve their communities and raising funds for local charities. Through cooperation with the Phoenix Project and firefighters, Prince's Trust students received education on the consequences of anti-social behaviour, arson and attacks on firefighters.



- Our **Phoenix Project** uses the positive role model of a firefighter to provide a life-changing programme for young people who are the most challenging and disadvantaged in local society. The project delivered 44 sessions throughout engaging with 655 young community members. 2019/20 saw the start of a new project within Phoenix, called **Phoenix Out & About**, an outreach programme, which allows youth organisations to book appointments for Phoenix to attend their venues to deliver sessions on subjects such as: fire safety, water safety, road safety, CPR, drug and alcohol awareness. This project has been successful to date, with organisations participating in this unique project and we continue to engage with more members of the community into 2020/21.

This year a large number of our Phoenix delegates have gone on to join Fire Cadets, the Sunderland Community Hub or Army Cadets. This is a great achievement for the young people themselves and for the Phoenix Project as a whole, as the project has engaged the young people enough to spark their interest in joining a youth organisations which in turn keeps them out of trouble and are able to meet new people with likeminded interests. This has an impact on the community as it reduces anti-social behaviour, with less young people on the streets.

- **Water Safety:** Following the success of our Water Safety Waterside Economies Initiative, we collaborated with the RNLI to deliver the Joint Community Responder Programme – the first in the UK. To date we have trained 13 waterside venues, with over 200 members of staff participating in the training. We continue to visit these venues to deliver both refresher training and to train new members of staff. Following the success of this initiative, other fire and rescue services from across the UK have introduced the scheme in their own service areas. One Programme member on the Gateshead side of the River Tyne has successfully rescued five members of the public from the River Tyne.



Protection

Our protection work covers all premises other than single private dwellings. This includes, for example, commercial premises and high-rise buildings, from new builds to heritage assets. Our aim is to educate and inform businesses about fire safety, and minimise the need for prosecutions and enforcement activity. Throughout 2019/20 we:

- Conducted 1,454 fire safety audits on commercial premises, of which 555 led to informal notifications.
- Issued 3 Alteration Notices (which require relevant to authorities be informed of planned alterations that may compromise fire safety), 8 Enforcement Notices (which require premises to be brought up to standard) and 37 Prohibition Notices (which will cease or restrict the premises' use).
- Conducted 3 prosecutions, with 2 leading to convictions; the third is awaiting sentencing.
- Conducted 78 inspections at petroleum sites and 157 inspections at premises storing explosives/fireworks.
- Completed 653 building regulation consultations.

We meet our statutory duty by carrying out a Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) 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.

As well as carrying out post fire audits following an incident, we continue to carry out targeted and timely engagements following fires in commercial premises, to improve fire safety awareness within the surrounding areas and promote a safer community. As part of this post fire engagement, and whilst carrying out our risk based fire safety audits and building regulations consultations, we continually gather risk information to inform firefighter safety.

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 currently has 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.

Grenfell Tower Fire

Following this tragic event, the Fire Safety Team worked to support our community, visiting high rise properties, conducting fire safety audits, and providing building owners and managers with the opportunity to ask advice and better assess the fire safety measures in place within their buildings. In 2019/20 we have continued to work with housing authorities, to help them interpret and apply, where appropriate, recommendations from Dame Hackitt's report: Building a Safer Future. We also continue to support housing associations, businesses and residents with planning for the introduction of new legislation on high risk buildings including high rise residential buildings.



Case Study: Protecting public safety

Following concerns raised by partner agencies regarding fireworks being set off in West Denton, Newcastle upon Tyne, our Fire Safety Inspectors carried out an inspection at a nearby premises licenced to store fireworks. Excessive and unsafe storage of fireworks was identified. An adjoining domestic flat was also inspected and a large quantity of fireworks were found. The contravention included:

- Storage in excess of the licenced quantity in a premises licenced to store fireworks,
- Storage without a licence to store fireworks,
- Unsafe storage of fireworks with combustible materials
- Storage without consideration of separation distances (how far the fireworks need to be from vulnerable premises e.g. housing)

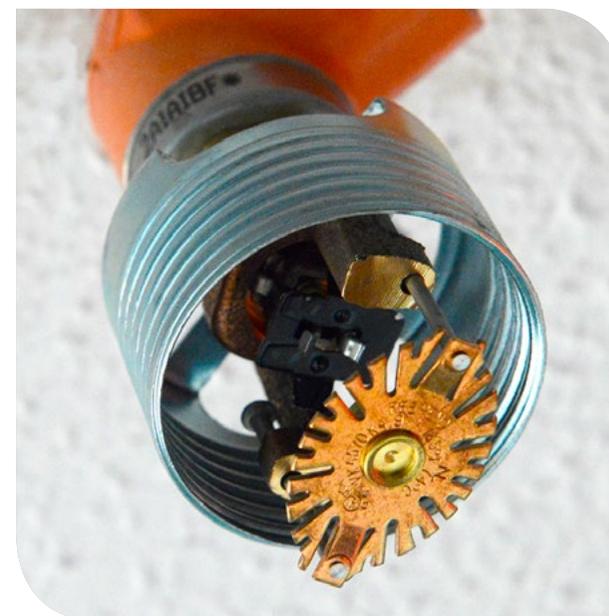
These factors presented a serious risk to life to those both inside and near the premises. As a result, the licence holder was prosecuted for four offences under the Explosives Regulations 2014. The fireworks were removed by the fire service and subsequently destroyed. Whilst we endeavour to work with licence holders to maintain safe storage arrangements, this case demonstrates that we will not hesitate to take action when required. Anyone convicted of offences under the Explosives Regulations, could face an unlimited fine and/or be imprisoned for up to two years.

Case Study: Fire in Regent Court stopped by Sprinkler System

Regent Court is a 10 storey high rise residential block in Gateshead. In 2012, we undertook joint visits with Gateshead Housing Company (GHC) and a number of significant fire safety issues were found at the premises. Our Fire Safety Department worked closely with GHC, residents, and the Local Authority, to provide support, expertise and assist in engagement with the residents to ensure a successful sprinkler retrofit was undertaken.

In February 2020, firefighters were called to a fire in a ground floor flat at Regent Court. On arrival firefighters discovered that a fire in the kitchen had been extinguished by a wall mounted sprinkler head; part of the retrofit installation. The firefighters rescued the occupier who was treated at the scene by paramedics. As well as protecting the occupier from the effects of fire, the sprinkler also prevented further fire damage to the property.

Sprinklers offer the best protection to those vulnerable people who need it most; including children, the elderly and disabled people and those who may have a degree of dependency. Sprinklers start to control a fire as soon as they are activated, affording vulnerable people a greater level of protection. In this case, the sprinkler installation that was installed with the support and advice of the Fire Safety team, prevented a flat fire from causing more serious injury, and spreading to cause further property damage.



Response

We operate a risk-based approach which prioritises how and where we focus our resources. Our targets are ambitious; but even as a high performing Service we want to seek continuous improvement for our communities. To protect our communities we regularly assess operational capability against risks to ensure we respond to incidents with the right resources, procedures and skills and within target response times.

We respond to a variety of emergency incidents with 24 fire engines and a range of special appliances operating from 17 fire stations across Tyne and Wear. Each fire engine is crewed by four firefighters and is equipped with the latest radio and computer technology, providing the vital communication link between operational crews and fire control. Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) respond to lower risk incidents with a crew of two. Stations are crewed by operational staff who work different shift patterns depending upon local risk:

- **Wholetime:** firefighters operate on stations 24 hours per day, working 9 hour day shifts and 15 hour night shifts.
- **Day Crewing:** the station is crewed by wholetime firefighters who live on the station over agreed periods to provide emergency cover 24 hours per day.
- **On-Call:** firefighters live or work in the local community near to the station and respond to emergency calls.



As well as responding to fires we respond appropriately to a wide range of emergency incidents, supporting other agencies in line with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) principles including:

- **Road traffic collisions** from low speed single car collisions to high-speed multi-vehicle crashes involving cars, lorries and buses. Our specialist cutting equipment ensures the safe and speedy rescue of casualties trapped in vehicles and our firefighters are first aid trained.
- **Rescues from water** led by our team of specialist Swift Water Rescue Team along with our fireboat, who keep our community safe on both the Tyne and the Wear, as well as on other inland waterways. In addition our technicians can carry out rescues on ice, mud and other unstable ground. All our firefighters are trained to national standards (Level 1 Water Awareness).
- **Preparation for incidents** involving chemicals, biological agents and gases. We have the ability to decontaminate our firefighters and large numbers of the public in the event of a major incident. This limits the harmful effects of hazardous materials. Our specialist vehicle carries equipment that can detect, identify and monitor potentially hazardous materials.

- **Specialist rescue**, including the rescue of people or animals from inaccessible places like cliffs, cranes, bridges and confined spaces. We also attend rail, aircraft and other incidents that involve fire or rescue.

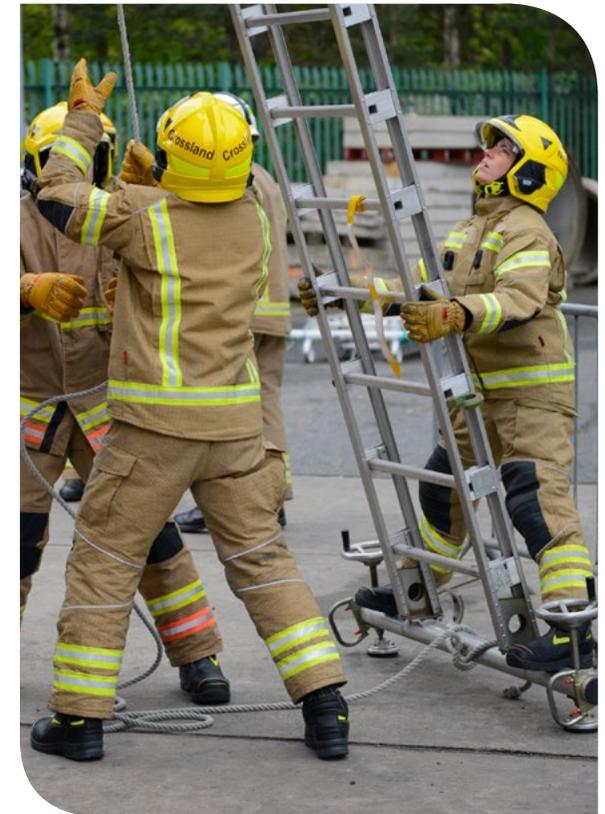
We host a number of national assets that enable us to respond to any foreseen incidents and we continually test our effectiveness by conducting regional and national multi-agency incident response exercises. We work with partners to optimise our multi-agency response and resilience through enhanced working relationships in line with JESIP.

Training Firefighters to Respond

We continue to collaborate with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS), County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) to recruit firefighters, culminating in 15 wholetime firefighters and 5 on call firefighters who are currently undergoing continuous development following their respective initial courses. Training for recruits commences with a 14-week basic training course covering core practical and theoretical elements of the role of a firefighter. The course prepares the new firefighter for the operational environment; once posted to station they then commence a development programme where they continue to enhance their skills, knowledge and the application of skills previously learnt. Throughout their development, each firefighter is required to complete a series of rigorous assessments to ensure 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 are required to maintain competence within the National Occupational Standards framework 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.



Operational Assurance

Responding to emergencies is core to our role, where risk is at its highest 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 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.
- That areas of good practice are identified, reviewed and shared to promote continuous improvement locally and nationally.

We implement operational assurance to ensure 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. A dedicated team supported by officers attend operational incidents, training and exercises to observe performance. An independent team carry out operational assurance activities. We use a Risk Management and Assurance Database (RMAD) to capture learning; identifying areas of notable practice or areas where further development are required. Through the RMAD, action plans are tracked 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.

The process seeks to validate the information gathered on operational performance, at incidents and training events, to verify and measure the level of compliance with current standard operating procedures and incident management systems. This ensures there is consistency and continual improvement across the organisation. This work is overseen by an Operational Assurance Group (OAG) focusing on good practice and performance.

The sharing of notable practice or opportunities for development beyond our immediate Service is extremely important. National Operational 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 (JOL). Each of these platforms assist emergency services to have an improved shared understanding of risk and how they have overcome these challenges. This promotes the safety and welfare of our communities and personnel.



Case study: Port of Tyne, Tyne Dock, South Shields, South Tyneside

In September 2019, crews responded to a report of smoke issuing from the top of a 45 metre concrete silo. The silo contained approximately 1,700 tonnes of biomass pellets. The responsible person confirmed that welding work had been undertaken earlier in the day. Crews observed a large amount of smoke dissipating from the blast panels at the top of the silo. A 360° walkway was present around the affected area, so two Rope Rescue operators donned in breathing apparatus and a Safety Officer donned in work restraint equipment proceeded to the walkway. From there, a Rope Rescue line was used to haul aloft the COBRA (our latest state of the art firefighting equipment). Crews initially removed a blast panel and deployed COBRA, before dampening down the remainder of the silo contents with a hose reel.

Case study: GE Oil and Gas, Wincomblee Road, Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne

Crews responded in November 2019 to an incident whereby an adult male had their arm trapped in heavy duty machinery. Due to the nature of the machinery, the casualty was trapped in a standing position with their left arm elevated above them. The incident became time critical as on scene paramedics had concerns the casualty going into cardiac arrest.

Crews physically supported the casualty, with two pairs of Holmatro spreaders used to prise apart the rollers and remove the casualty to a place of safety where they could be treated.

The helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS) were requested during the early stages of the incident, to provide advanced medical care and were on scene when the casualty was extricated from the machinery.

Case study: The Caledonian Hotel, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne

Crews responded to a report of a fire in October 2019 within the roof space of The Caledonian Hotel, Jesmond. A large number of appliances and specialist resources were deployed for approximately 6 hours to extinguish a fire that had started in the roof void. Due to the construction of the roof, there were very few fire breaks or compartmentation within the void, and as such fire was able to spread quicker than anticipated. Crews demonstrated their professionalism and identified the location of the fire, primarily through the use of thermal scanners. Crews also used radio communications to help not only guide the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) into position, but for the ALP to apply water to the fire whilst crews remained within the building. These interactions and teamwork ensured the fire was not able to spread to adjoining properties, and was confined to the roof void and the top floor.

Case study: Rectory Terrace, Boldon, South Tyneside

Crews responded to a report of a fire in a two storey commercial premise in Rectory Terrace, Boldon in May 2019. On arrival, crews were met with a well-developed fire and cylinders could be heard venting off inside the premises. Not long after the attendance of the initial appliances, there was a rapid growth in fire development and cylinders could be heard exploding. At its height, the incident had nine appliances and two ALPs in attendance.



Resilience

The National Resilience programme is an essential part of government arrangements to protect the national infrastructure in the event of catastrophic incidents.

Our national assets include:

- Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) specialists
- Hazardous Materials Detection, Identification and Monitoring capabilities
- Mass Decontamination capabilities
- Swift Water Rescue Team
- High Volume Pump (HVP) that can remove large quantities of 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.

Our specialist crews, equipment and capabilities enhance our ability to respond to incidents such as terrorist attacks, industrial and domestic accidents and natural disasters.

The threat of terrorism is increasing and to ensure the safety of Tyne and Wear residents, we train continuously so that we are ready to respond to any unforeseen threat. The type and scale of terrorist attack changes continuously, therefore our capabilities must be flexible enough to meet the changing 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. This includes large-scale exercises, which test all our capabilities, Exercise Bodega took place in January 2020, at our Headquarters and comprised of a marauding terrorist attack (MTA) table top exercise with Northumbria Police, the North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) and the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART).

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 (MOU) ensures we work coherently.

We supported Exercise Poseidon in September 2019, which involved use of the HVP which took place at Derwent Reservoir in Durham / Northumberland with other fire and rescue services, HART, the Police, Military and the Rapid Relief Team (RRT).

Our Resilience team also oversee the upper tier Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites within Tyne and Wear ensuring compliance and exercising in line with statutory requirements.

We engage with the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and work collaboratively with our partners on various areas of business continuity planning (which includes 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 to be able to share and collaborate on National Resilience issues.

We have a fully qualified USAR dog and handler and this K9 capability is a valuable addition to our full USAR capability and is a welcome addition to the National Resilience Assets. Our K9 is undergoing further training and certification with Northumbria Police to enhance capabilities and collaboration opportunities in the future.

Following the terrorist attack at Manchester Arena, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, commissioned an independent review of the tragic event. Following publication of The Kerslake Report: An independent review into the preparedness for, and emergency response to, the Manchester Arena attack on 22 May 2017 and subsequent recommendations, we have made the required revisions to our policies and procedures and we constantly learn from national and international events to ensure preparedness. This includes proactive response and threat planning with our partners in the other emergency services and the wider LRF community.

We are signed up to the National Mutual Aid Protocol, this agreement establishes the terms under which an Authority may expect to request assistance from, or provide assistance to, another Authority in the event of a serious national incident. Additionally, in sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 there is a legal requirement for neighbouring fire and rescue authorities to enter into formal reinforcement and support in emergency situations.

Case Study: Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) zonal exercise (ZONESA)

NRAT requires each fire and rescue service that hosts a USAR capability to comply with an assurance process that validates the competence of that service to host the National Resilience Asset. This assurance process is carried out on a three year cycle with year 1 being a self-assessment, year 2 a regional exercise and year 3 a zonal exercise.

We volunteered to host the year 3 exercise to demonstrate that as a zone, we were able to perform to the standards expected by National Resilience as well as demonstrating our preparedness for operating at Response Option 4: Attendance of a single group – Initial Operating Capacity (IOC).

Zonesa was a two-day USAR exercise which brought together five USAR teams from Merseyside, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Tyne and Wear which form the USAR Zone 1 training and exercising group.

The teams participated in a series of exercises designed to test a zonal response to a major structural collapse and involved a Police led convoy to RAF Spadeadam. The exercise tested the newly formed training and exercising group which will support the planning and delivery of training and exercises for the five USAR teams. In support of this exercise, the teams were required to demonstrate 24hr self-sufficiency including sleeping facilities.

NRAT officers evaluated the training by requesting all technicians complete a written examination with verbal questioning/observation carried out throughout the two day exercise. An action log was compiled and sent to the five USAR teams for consideration.

The teams worked well together to achieve their objectives, this was evidenced further when technicians from each service participated in mixed groups, demonstrating that training delivery has been standardised across the country.



Collaboration

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 Service has a successful track record of collaborating, including co-location at a number of sites and improved operational and preventative activities. The introduction of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, further enhanced the democratic accountability of fire and rescue services and police forces to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency services through closer collaboration.

To support greater collaboration we have formalised governance arrangements with a number of partners including NFRS, CDDFRS, the PCC, Northumbria Police and NEAS. The partnerships set out to develop opportunities aligned to the following objectives:

- **Provide improved outcomes** - maintaining or improving the services to local people and communities;
- **Reduce demand** - contributing towards strategic objectives of decreasing risk in communities by reducing demand on services;
- **Deliver better value for money** - producing quantifiable efficiencies

We continue to explore co-location opportunities to maximise our estate footprint, support collaboration and generate revenue income. The organisational management review impacted the spatial occupancy rates across our sites. The utilisation of our estate by partners supports the sustainability of the buildings and demonstrates a proactive approach to managing our infrastructure and building environment. Over the last three years we have seen a substantial increase in the number of partners and agencies who operate or conduct activities from our locations and at present 29 partners operate from our estate. The public benefits from collaboration are visible within our community, including co-location with other emergency services at our stations. This includes Northumbria Police, NEAS, Great North Air Ambulance, the North of Tyne Mountain Rescue and Northumbria Blood Bikes.

We will continue to work with partners to identify 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:

Community Public Access Defibrillators (CPADs) are located at five of our community fire stations, Chopwell, Sunderland Central, Farringdon, Gateshead and Byker and it our intention to locate a CPAD at each of our sites. In addition to the five CPADs we have 32 defibrillators located on response vehicles and installed at our headquarters, our Occupational Health Unit (OHU), Brigade Training Centre (BTC), Technical Services Centre (TSC) and Safetyworks!.

Weather stations have been installed at several of our sites in collaboration with the Urban Observatory at the School of Engineering, Newcastle University. This partnership has enabled accurate weather data to analyse in conjunction with incident data. Prior to this partnership, the nearest Met Office weather station was located in County Durham.

Working in partnership with social housing, health and the police: This allows us to 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.

Collaborative training: Staff regularly undertake training with partners to capitalise on skills and resources through enhanced shared learning. Joint training has been conducted in the remit of fire safety, fire investigation, Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and USAR.

External Assessments

To support our commitment to continuous quality improvement we participate in a number of external assessment which have resulted in accreditations and awards which allows us to be measured against a variety of quality standards and permits a certified and impartial organisation to assess the work we undertake. We have been successful in achieving several awards and accreditations, including:

- Investors in People (IIP) Gold award 2020.
- ISO 9001 Quality Management Assessment.
- Disability Confident Leader 2019 - 2022.
- Stonewall Diversity Champion 2020.
- Inclusive Top 50 award.
- White Ribbon Accreditation 2019 - 2020.
- Council for Learning outside the classroom (LOtC) quality badge awarded to Safetyworks! in September 2019.
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Health and Safety Awards Gold assessment in 2019.

Events

Equality and diversity is part of our everyday lives and 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. A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of this approach. Below are examples of some of the inclusive events we have participated in:

- Our Disability Network hosted their first national conference 'Ability not Disability' in December 2019, which coincided with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The conference promoted good practice, shared learning, employee reflections from personal experiences and organisational approaches to disability support and awareness. A wide range of stakeholders attended with 90 delegates from 30 organisations.
- The Blue Light Choir was established to raise awareness of mental health within the emergency services and comprises of our staff and personnel from Northumbria Police, CDDFRS, NEAS, the NHS and the HM Prison Service. In September 2019, the Choir sang with the Edinburgh Police Choir at the Emergency Services Day '999' and also participated in the Army Benevolent Fund Charity 75th anniversary celebrations in November 2019.



- Our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Network hosted their first national conference, ‘Challenging Perceptions’ in February 2020. The conference focussed on recruitment and diversifying the workforce, supporting and retaining staff and community engagement. 90 delegates from 23 organisations attended.
- In conjunction with Northumbria Police, the BAME Network developed a Hate Crime Charter which was approved by the Authority in January 2020. Work in support of the Charter included participating in the Hate Crime Walk of Solidarity and the Hate Crime and Community Tension Monitoring Group.
- Our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + (LGBT+) Network collaborated with partners across a range of events for the twelfth annual Northern Pride celebrations in Newcastle in July 2019, and Sunderland in September 2019. Staff, volunteers and cadets supported Newcastle Ravens annual Hadrian Cup Rugby tournament in March 2020. The largest inclusive rugby tournament in the UK with over 700 people in attendance, delivered in partnership with UK Pride.
- Our LGBT+ Network hosted their first national conference in November 2018, and following this along with other fire and rescue service representatives formed a national LGBT+ Network.

The inaugural meeting to launch the Network took place in January 2020, where a mission statement and values were agreed and officers appointed to committee roles. It was agreed to hold the annual conference the Friday before every future UK Pride event in the host city.

- We collaborated with the young LGBT+ community in Washington by participating in an ‘Out and Proud’ event in October 2019. This event was supported by staff, fire cadets, Northumbria Police, Washington Mind, Gentoo and the Foundation of Light.
- Staff were invited by Heworth Grange secondary school Pride Society to talk to pupils about the Services’ LGBT+ Network. This was a great engagement opportunity for staff to support the diversifying the workforce agenda and to discuss the diverse roles within the Service.
- In collaboration with Northumbria Police and the PCC we support the White Ribbon campaign whose objective is the elimination of male violence against women. The charity works with organisations to ensure workplaces and communities are made safer for women, and they actively challenge male cultures that lead to harassment, abuse, and violence. In November 2019, we were awarded the White Ribbon accreditation.

- Eighteen staff continue to participate as mentors with the Girls Network and Boys Network working with four local schools. Mentors volunteers with girls and boys of secondary school ages to inspire and empower them by connecting them with a mentor / professional role model. In addition, to the one to one sessions, mentors have organised team building days and attended school careers fairs to provide pupils with an insight into the different career paths within the Service.



4

Our 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.

In 2019, our Service was graded as Good by HMICFRS.

There are three pillars of inspection:

- a. How **effective** is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- b. How **efficient** is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- c. How well does the FRS look after its **people**?

We were pleased to be acknowledged as ‘Good’ in all three areas inspected, which is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our staff and volunteers.

HMICFRS stated in its summary:

“Overall, we commend Tyne and Wear FRS for its performance. This provides a good foundation for improvement in the year ahead.”

HMICFRS reported they were pleased with our performance in keeping people safe and secure. The Inspectorate judged that we are good at:

- Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies;
- Protecting the public through fire regulation;
- Responding to fires and other emergencies; and
- Responding to national risks
- Looking after our people
- Promoting values and culture, ensuring fairness, and promoting diversity.

For details of the independent inspection and its findings, read the [full inspection report](#) on the HMICFRS website. To ensure continuous development we produced a post inspection improvement plan, containing improvement actions, which has been monitored and progressed over the last year.

Our Business Support and Improvement team will continue to prepare the Service for future inspections.

Operational Performance during 2019/20

The Authority measures and monitors performance using a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are also used to compare performance against other fire and rescue authorities in England. Achievements against these indicators are scrutinised at our Policy and Performance Committee, further details are located [on our website](#).

We aim to attend an incident as quickly as possible and we closely monitor our response times and review how we can remain amongst the fastest responders within our available resources. Our targeted prevention work plays a major role in keeping people safe and our HSCs 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. This proactive work is also undertaken in our fire safety activity, RBIP and operational health checks. This is where we engage with the business sector to keep people safe in their working environment.

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.

We continue to work collaboratively with partners to address the wider social issues that result in anti-social behaviour and deliberate fires, to identify joint solutions to support communities and raise awareness of fire prevention and safety. This year has seen nine fire fatalities, seven of which were accidental dwelling fires. Following each fatality a case conference was convened to look at any emerging trends, analyse data, shape our targeted intervention, any shared learning and feed into 2020/21 strategy.

For further details about our operational performance and district level performance, review our [quarterly performance](#) reports.

Corporate Key Performance Indicators

Departmental KPIs were introduced in 2018/19 as an integral element of the Strategic Planning Framework (SPF). To support the development of these new KPIs, monitoring information was generated from an extensive cross-mapping exercise which involved alignment with:

- SPF and department plans
- External reporting requirements for Home Office, HMICFRS, Equality, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and National Occupational Health data (collated by Cleveland Fire and Rescue Service)
- Metropolitan fire and rescue service KPIs
- Anticipated HMICFRS Inspection gaps – e.g. proposal for each department to have KPIs on staff competency (RedKite) and Quality Assurance.

To ensure the relevance and value of our corporate KPIs links were strengthened through the introduction of a new process for department plans. A KPI definition template was developed to capture the purpose, responsibilities, calculation method, target and data source and a spreadsheet developed to capture data and support Power BI performance reporting. Monthly performance updates are provided to our Area Managers and quarterly performance information is shared with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Policy and Performance Committee.



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Integrated Risk Management Plan

We are required by law to produce an IRMP to manage change, strengthen prevention, reduce costs and reduce the 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 almost £14m of IRMP efficiencies since 2010/11 to date, with many of the efficiency ideas coming from our own employees.

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 2019/20, 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.

The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reported to the Authority in February 2020, shows that the projected resources for the Authority over the medium term can potentially fund the projected revenue budgets based on the government's claim that austerity measures had ended and that improved government funding

provided in 2020/21 to the public sector was sustainable into the medium term. The focus of the IRMP 2020-2023 will therefore be adjusted to redirect all budget resources saved in to other priority areas and allow for new ways of working to be considered instead of having to help fund a budget gap.

Key Developments include:

- **Dynamically adjusting the distribution and availability of 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 the Authority in February 2019 to relocate two fire engines, two specialist fire engines and two TRVs to different fire stations. This ensures better alignment to the risk and resulting demand profiles. These moves commenced in April 2019 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.
- **Equipment** – We invested significantly in equipment to keep our communities and firefighters safe which included the addition of specialist first aid equipment, a programme for

the replacement of our firefighting hose, the purchase of new firefighting foam equipment and the replacement of our breathing apparatus face masks. We also developed an 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 has included new fire appliances, personal protective equipment and body worn cameras.

- **Operational Communications** – The Emergency Services Network (ESN) is the next generation of critical communications for the 3 Emergency Services and other user organisations that is being delivered by the Emergency Services' Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). Utilising EE's 4G mobile network it will replace the current Airwave system and provide a common communications platform for all emergency services supporting collaborative communications and enhancing access to data and information thus improving community outcomes. This is a complex programme being led by the Home Office. Our Service is making preparations to accommodate transition which is currently scheduled during 2023. This involves upgrading equipment in our Control Room and installing new communications equipment in fire appliances.

5

How we meet the requirements of the National Framework

Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 the Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework which sets out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities and contains guidance in connection with the discharge of any of their functions.

Every fire and rescue authority must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions. The latest Framework upon the national programme of reform within the sector and a number of requirements which fire authorities must comply with in the areas of:

- **Delivery of functions:** a need to identify and assess risk, prevent fire and promote fire safety, respond effectively to incidents and a statutory duty to consider collaboration
- **National Resilience:** identify and address any gaps in capability and prepare to respond to terrorist attacks
- **Governance:** to produce an IRMP, Annual Statement of Assurance and financial plans
- **Achieving Value for money:** having a policy on reserves, commercial transformation and trading
- **Workforce:** the need for a People Strategy and implementation of the new Professional Standards when published.
- **Inspection, Intervention and Accountability:** co-operation with the new inspection regime and compliance with the Local Authority Transparency Code.

Details of how we meet the framework requirements are summarised as follows:



Fire and Rescue National Framework

Framework Requirement

How this is met

Delivery of Functions

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce an IRMP. • Have arrangements to prevent and mitigate the risks including working with Strategic Resilience Board. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We produce a SCSP, incorporating our IRMP. This includes our most recent SCSP. • Our SCSP is supported by a Community Safety Strategy, Organisational Development Strategy and MTFS. • We routinely conduct IRMP reviews, drawing on a strong evidence base (e.g. workload modelling, Mosaic data). • We produce and maintain a CRP and use this to inform our Community Safety Strategy. • Our strategy is supported by clear policies and procedures. • Our performance is monitored by Performance Action Group (staff) and Policy and Performance Committee (Authority Members) to ensure risk is being mitigated. • We raise awareness through ongoing Community Safety education and HSC programmes, and safety campaigns (e.g. Bonfire). • We work with businesses to reduce risk through our 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. • We engage with government and partners on National Resilience issues through the Strategic Resilience Board (SRB). Our Chief Fire Officer (CFO) is a member of the SRB. The SRB ensures that all capability gaps are brought to the attention of government and will push hard to secure appropriate funding to address these gaps. • We contribute to our LRF, working with partners to reduce risk in our communities. |
|--|---|

Framework Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make provision for promoting fire safety, including fire prevention, and have a locally determined risk-based inspection programme. • Targeting those at greatest risk, including businesses' economic risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our SCSP and supporting strategies set out the activities we deliver to promote fire safety, including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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, 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.
<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 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 strategies. • 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 (TWFRS Ltd), and co-location with other emergency services at our stations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess what the FA 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.

Framework Requirement	How this is met
<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).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies within their area and in other areas in line with their mutual aid agreements. • So far as is practicable, enter into reinforcement schemes, or mutual aid agreements, with other FRAs 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). • We routinely conduct IRMP reviews, drawing on a strong evidence base (e.g. workload modelling, Mosaic data). • We have a strong mobilising system, supported by an Emergency Call Management Policy. • We make use of 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 Poseidon, Zonesa, London Bridge, and Bodega). • We have cross-border response arrangements with our neighbouring services and have negotiated common command arrangements with NFRS. • We collaborate extensively with NEAS and Northumbria Police in the interests of public safety. • Support a range of community activities including: post incident HSCs, requests by partners, hot strikes, fitting anti arson devices and gaining entry for NEAS. • Familiarisation, inspection and support of high-risk premises. Continuation of high rise work in line with Grenfell Tower Inquiry. • We participate in the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) and NRAT audits. • We have contingencies in place in the event of Industrial Action.

Framework Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have effective business continuity arrangements in place in accordance with duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. • Make every endeavour to meet the full range of service delivery risks and national resilience duties and commitments that they face. Business continuity plans should not be developed on the basis of armed forces assistance being available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We maintain and test Business Continuity Plans (BCP) across the Service. • We align 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 • 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 local partners, such as local authorities and wider health bodies. 	<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 Statement of Intent. • Fire-Fire collaboration arrangements with NFRS and CDDFRS supported by a Collaboration Agreement Statement of Intent. • We have assisted other services with wildfire and flooding incidents. • We have mutual aid agreements in place with neighbouring services and participate in our LRF. • We operate SafetyWorks! as a community facility, in partnership with a range of other organisations. • We have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with CDDFRS regarding IOSH training. • We have developed USAR training to be shared with our partners. • We participate in joint procurement and recruitment exercises.

Framework Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other fire and rescue authorities to deliver intraoperability (between fire and rescue authorities) and interoperability (with other responders such as other emergency services, wider Category 1 and 2 responders and Local Resilience Forums) in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). • Collaborate with the National Resilience Lead Authority to ensure interoperability is maintained for National Resilience assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We participate in the NCAF, and deploy national assets (e.g. USAR and HVP as required). • We participate in the JESIP.

National Resilience

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the lead authority to support the national resilience assurance processes to ensure capabilities are maintained at a high state of operational readiness. • Includes devolved training and long-term capability management arrangements via representation on the NFCCs Strategic Resilience Board, analysis of the National Risk Assessment. • Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning. • Assess existing capability and identify any gaps as part of the integrated risk management planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We maintain policies and procedures relating to local and national risks. • We continue to develop our USAR team, including having a qualified USAR search and rescue dog. • Improving facilities to ensure we have one of the best training environments to provide a challenging and stimulating experience staff as well as partner agencies who may/will participate in collaborative training. • We have participated in NRAT multi-capability assurance inspections. • We maintain a multi-agency community risk register via our LRF.
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Framework Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight to the Home Office or Strategic Resilience Board, capability gaps that cannot be met even when taking into account mutual aid arrangements, pooling and reconfiguration of resources and collective action. • Proactively engage with, and support, the NCAF arrangements including the NFCC's lead operational role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We participate in all NFCC groups relating to resilience. • We lead and participate in national and local exercises (e.g. Exercise Poseidon, Zonesa, London Bridge, and Bodega).
<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. • Responsible for maintaining the robustness of 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 gaps in capability are identified • Work with police forces and ambulance trusts to provide tri-service assurance of capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We participate in the NCAF and 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 Poseidon, Zonesa, London Bridge, and Bodega). • Working closely with partner agencies for continual mutual/collaborative training to improve knowledge and working relationships in relation to MTA incidents. • We employ a Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Advisor. • Our CFO is a member of the SRB. • We have trained National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILOs) and run a NILO course in collaboration with Northumbria Police and NEAS. • We participate in our LRF. • We have a bespoke Threat Level Response plan which is invoked based on changes to the national threat level.

Framework Requirement	How this is met
Governance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each FRA has a statutory duty to ensure provision of their core functions • Each FRA will appoint an individual – commonly known as a Chief Fire Officer – 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. • The CFO must, in exercising their functions, have regard to the FRAs 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. • Expectation is that FRS engage with NFCC and, in turn, that the NFCC works to support and represent every service. 	<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 MTFS. • Our FRA has approved and we adhere to standing orders; the rules of procedure governing the way in which we conduct our business. • 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). • We review our performance against the requirements of the National Framework as part of our SOAAR and annual Corporate Governance Review (including our annual governance statement). • Our CFO is Chair of the NFCC Operations Coordination Committee and our staff are members of multiple NFCC committees and groups.

Framework Requirement	How this is met
Achieving Value for Money	
<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 SOAAR, MTFS, Efficiency Plan and Reserves Policy.
<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 CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance, and be aligned with the IRMP • Publish 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 Authority Members. • We report regularly to the Authority on our capital programme and revenue budget.

Framework Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish policy on reserves. • 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.
<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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We participate in regional and national procurement frameworks, and in 2019/20 drove procurement efficiencies of almost £0.215m. • Our Standing Orders set out clear guidelines for tendering procedures and approvals linked to contract values to ensure Value for Money.

Framework Requirement	How this is met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> • 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.
<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. 	<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. • The Authority holds shares, although no dividends have been paid. • We observe all State Aid regulations

Framework Requirement

- 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.

How this is met

- We engage in national and research development programmes, including providing staff time to participate in NFCC initiatives.

Workforce

- 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.
- 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 inclusion in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.
- We have introduced a revised PDR process, linked to our Leadership Bond that has enhanced our development processes through individual objective setting.
- We are represented on the NFCC Talent Management Working Group to help inform future approaches to Talent Management.

Framework Requirement	How this is met
<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 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. 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 authority'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. 	<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 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. 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, at headquarters and TSC. 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.

Framework Requirement

- 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.
- 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.

How this is met

- No principal fire officers have been reappointed.
- Recruitment for CFO and ACO posts were open to national competition.
- Recruitment campaign jointly with CDDFRS and NFRS.

Framework Requirement	How this is met
Inspection Intervention and Accountability	
<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 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.
<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 Chief Fire Officer – 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 the 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, which have an unqualified opinion from our external auditors and an unqualified Value for Money conclusion, annually. • 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. • 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.

Framework Requirement

- In demonstrating their accountability to communities for the service they provide, fire and rescue authorities need to:
 - 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
 - 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.

How this is met

- 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.
- We adhere to the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- We produce quarterly performance reports, benchmarked against other metropolitan FRSs.
- We maintain policies and procedures relating to data and information governance.
- We provide data returns as required to the Home Office and HMICFRS.

5 Governance arrangements

Governance Framework

The Authority has a responsibility to ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used appropriately. We have arrangements in place, including 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 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 comprises of 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 and is reviewed annually. The Code ensures that we comply with recommended practice and maintain high standards of conduct.

Any breaches of the Code are reported to the Authority's [Monitoring Officer](#) who will determine whether the complaint should be investigated and if so by whom.

The framework is based upon the following seven core 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.

How the Authority Works

The Services overall governing body is the Authority which comprises of 16 elected members, nominated by the five constituent councils of Tyne and Wear. There is also representation from the PCC who attends Authority meetings and participates in discussions as a voting member.

The Authority formulates policies and principal objectives and meets nine times a year and is supported by three standing committees:

- **Governance Committee**

This Committee provides independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the Authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it effects the Authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, oversees the financial reporting process and promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by Members of the Authority.

- **Policy and Performance Committee**

This Committee scrutinises performance information in respect of the Authority's duty to secure best value and to consider policy initiatives in respect of emerging issues.

- **Human Resources Committee**

This Committee meets to determine and approve the establishment and terms and conditions of all employees of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority above SCP 57, subject to those matters delegated to the CFO the Emergency Planning Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority.

There are a further four Committees which meet on an ad hoc basis to discuss specific matters:

- **Appointments Committee**

This Committee, where appropriate shortlists and interviews candidates and make appointments for the posts of CFO, DCFO, ACO and Chief Emergency Planning Officer.

- **Disciplinary Appeals Committee**

This Committee determines all appeals by employees of the Authority (other than Principal Officers) against dismissal.

- **Emergency Committee**

This Committee deals with any matter of urgency which may arise between meetings of the Authority or Committee.

- **Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee**

This Sub-Committee hears and determines appeals whereby the employee has a right of appeal and the decision leading to the appeal has been taken by the Human Resources Committee, including appeals by Principal Officers against decisions of the Human Resources Committee in disciplinary proceedings.



The roles and responsibilities of members and officers are clearly defined and documented, with [delegation arrangements](#) and protocols for effective communication:

Standing orders and financial regulations are in place that set out how our 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.

For further information regarding our [Authority](#), please visit our website.

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](#) 2019/20 based on the annual review of effectiveness, was agreed by the Authority on 13 July 2020. The papers include:

- **Annual Governance Review 2019/20 Report**
- **Local Code of Corporate Governance**
- **Annual Governance Statement 2019/20**
- **Action plan**

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

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

The code came into effect 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 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 which is located at [transparency](#).

Fair processing notice / 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.

Our [privacy notice](#) was last updated in November 2018 and a full copy of this can be found on our website.



Management of Corporate Risk

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 Security and resilience – business continuity management systems. The system details how we will continue to deliver critical functions in the event of a business disruption.

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 the Service**

We operate a robust process for corporate risk management, including a Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) chaired by the Chair of the Authority and attended by ELT members. Where appropriate these actions are included and aligned with the annual risk plans of the appropriate departments.

The CRMG is essential to the effectiveness of this process. The group develop strategy to manage risks within in the Corporate Risk Profile (CRP) and develop, implement, monitor and review action plans to minimise corporate strategic risks.



7 Financial assurance

Finance Officer's Statement

The Authority's Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practice, as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/2020 ('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 2019/2020.

*The Net Budget of £49.921m is adjusted for additional section 31 grant received and an amendment required under the Code in respect of the Collection Fund Account.

**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.

Financial Management and Performance 2019/2020

Revenue Expenditure and Income Summary

The estimated net revenue expenditure for 2019/2020 to be met from Government Grants and local taxpayers was approved by the Authority at £48.615m.

The following table summarises the financial position for the year:

	2019 / 2020 £'000
Community Safety	4,293
Fire Fighting and Rescue Operations	25,442
Corporate and Democratic Core	175
Non Distributed Costs	741
Net Cost of Services	30,651
Other Operating Income and Expenditure	25,345
Net Operating Expenditure**	55,996
Capital Financing	(1,121)
Transfer from Pension Reserve**	(9,340)
Net Transfer to Reserves	4,386
Net Budget*	49,921
Financed by:	
Revenue Support Grant and General Grants	(8,796)
Top Up Grant	(11,274)
Business Rates and Collection Fund	(4,429)
Council Tax Precepts and Collection Fund	(24,752)
Section 31 Non-Specific Grants	(670)
Total Resources*	(49,921)
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 2019/2020 showed a net overall underspend of £1.515m. This was reported to a meeting of the Fire Authority in July 2020. 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 across the service, resulted in increased financial awareness and tighter budgetary control, which achieved savings across most service areas;
- A significant saving of £0.880m was identified from a mid-year review of the contingency budget to streamline the resource for this and future years to make the revenue budget more sustainable;
- Implementation of the IRMP action to dynamically adjust the distribution and availability of appliances based on risk and demand from 2nd April 2019, resulted in an in year saving in 2019/2020 of £0.746m on the operational employee cost budget. This has additionally had a positive impact on helping to reduce overtime during this period; and
- All aspects of the Authority's finances continue to be 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 be a success and income generation is expected to increase in future years as a result of this new impetus.

The main variations are detailed below for information:

- **Employee costs** – a net underspend of £1.473m largely due to operational and corporate vacancy levels and the numbers of operational staff in development. Operational vacancy levels assumed to be 5% for budget purposes actually averaged 11%, generating a saving of £0.770m, and £0.166m resulted from an additional 34 staff being in development. During the year there was an average of ten corporate vacancies, resulting in a further saving of £0.323m. Savings were also made on employer pension costs, arising from the impact of temporary staffing arrangements, transitional movements between pension schemes, and employees opting out of the pension scheme altogether. Operational overtime costs continued to be a significant budget pressure, particularly working with a reduced establishment. The savings in salaries and pensions have accommodated these increased costs;
- **Premises** – a net overspend of £0.038m due to a new electricity contract with a higher unit cost than budgeted;
- **Transport** – a net underspend of £0.014m largely due to a reduced demand for transport repairs and maintenance from Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) through the Service Level Agreement (SLA). This is matched off by reduced income from NFRS, resulting in a neutral impact on the overall budget position.

Savings were also achieved in reduced travelling expenses and have absorbed an overspend of £0.034m on fuel, due to in year fuel price rises before the price fall and free fuel offer at the beginning of the COVID pandemic in March, as well as the strategic decision to front load supplies in case of fuel supply issues caused by BREXIT;

- **Supplies and Services** – almost neutral with a small net overspend of £0.001m. There were a number of minor over and underspends against various budgets, including postage, ICT and PPE budgets;
- **Contingencies** – an underspend of £0.198m as the strategic contingency and provision for pay awards which remained in the budget were no longer required, or were delayed in part due to the impact of the coronavirus;
- **Support Services and Recharges** – an underspend of £0.049m due to an in year saving on the SLA with the Lead Authority after changes were made once the budget was set;
- **Income** – a net overachievement of £0.406m, largely due to one-off income for courses and Trauma Support, additional secondment income, over-recovery from sales of vehicles and equipment, insurance reimbursement and additional rental income. The Authority have also received new grant allocations for New Risks and COVID-19 and increased allocation of Pension Grant. These have been partially offset by under-recovery of income from NFRS due to reduced demand on the SLA and reduced allocation of section 31 Business Rates grant;

- **Interest received** - £0.118m over budget as increases to cash flow levels and a steady base rate have resulted in more interest received on the Authority's cash working balances during the year;
- **Capital Financing** – an underspend of £0.146m from savings on debt charges due to a lower debt charge interest applied during the year and the use of revenue to finance the capital programme; and
- **Appropriation to / (from) Reserves and Provisions** – an appropriation to reserves of £0.850m predominantly due to underspends against budget negating the need to draw down from Reserves in year, along with agreed appropriations to the Revenue Budget Carry Forward Reserve for known future requirements. This includes the transfer of unspent COVID-19 grant and New Risks funding for demands in 2020/2021. Year-end adjustments were also made to reflect the IFRS Employee Benefit accounting entry and the Collection Fund balance required for 2019/2020. This is in contrast to the 2019/20 budget position when it was first approved by the Authority as it was expected that an appropriation from reserves of £0.841m would be required to help fund the revenue budget.

Members agreed to appropriate the surplus funds of £1.515m to a newly created COVID-19 Reserve temporarily established to meet the financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the reduction in Council Tax and Business Rates resources, if no Government resources are forthcoming.

This Reserve is expected to remain in place until March 2021, when it will be fully reviewed.

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 below 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 £789.890m on its Balance Sheet, most of the 'deficit' relates to the pensions deficiency of £872.935m 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), coupled with the fact that the Authority is addressing this potential 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 £83.045m. The Authority also has assets worth £77.161m and cash backed reserves of £35.771m, which support the view that the Authority's Balance Sheet and finances are in fact healthier than implied by the published accounts.

	31 March 2020 £'000
Property, Plant and Equipment, and other Assets	77,161
Short term investments	37,578
Money owed to the Authority - (debtors)	14,179
Money owed by the Authority - (creditors / borrowing)	(918,180)
Provisions	(628)
Net Assets / (Liabilities)	(789,890)
Revaluation reserve and Capital Adjustment account	46,655
Pension reserve	(872,935)
Other unusable reserves	619
Earmarked reserves	29,419
Capital reserves	2,409
General Fund Balance	3,943
Total Reserves	(789,890)

Capital Expenditure

The Fire Authority spent £2.109m on capital schemes during 2019/2020. The main schemes were:

The 2019/2020 programme was financed as follows:	£'000
Equipment	1,124
Property Improvements	312
Vehicles	673
	2,109
Financed by:	
Revenue Contribution to Capital	260
Grants / Capital Contributions	296
Earmarked reserves	127
Capital Receipts applied	1,426
	2,109

Auditors Findings

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2019/20
Annual accounts submitted for audit on time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unqualified audit opinion *	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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 November 2020 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.

A revised and updated MTFS covering the period 2020/2021 to 2023/2024 was reported to Members in October 2020 which shows three potential funding positions reflecting a more positive position based on current knowledge and the assumption that austerity is over.

* 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 the models illustrated, a modest gap is projected in only the worst case scenario, however the financial position for the Authority will not be clear until the outcome of the Spending Review, now due to be carried out in 2021, is known and a multi-year funding settlement is put in place by the Government which takes into account the impact of both the current coronavirus pandemic and BREXIT planned for later this year.

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 requirement of government at the time 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

* It is pleasing to report that the actual efficiencies achieved show that the Authority generated just over £1m of additional savings compared to those set out in the original Efficiency Plan submitted to the Government. The Authority achieved Total Budget Efficiencies of £4.058m and Total IRMP Actions of £5.229m over the four year period. It is noteworthy that the Authority achieved £1.337m of additional savings through Budget Efficiencies than it had set out in its Efficiency Plan and almost reached its planned IRMP Actions target of £5.527m. It is also important to understand that during the four year period covered by the Efficiency Plan, whilst the Government's funding position remained as expected, other resources such as Council Tax and Business Rates yields varied compared to those predicted by Government. These changes, in addition to the impact of higher pay awards in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, inflation and other internal budget pressures meant that additional Budget Efficiencies were required, particularly in the latter years of the Plan, to enable these budget pressures to be met.

Should the resources position improve for the Authority (as the government has indicated austerity is over) then the focus of future Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP) will be adjusted to redirect efficiencies into key service priority areas.

Spending Pressures and Commitments

In addition to funding changes, the 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.

	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	1,081	923
2019/20 – Budget Efficiencies	0	346
IRMP Actions	1,489	855
Total as at 31 March 2020	8,248	9,287

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Protecting our environment

In 2019/20, we have implemented the following actions to help protect our environment:

- TWFRS have approved a business case for the appointment of an independent environmental consultant to appraise our estate and advise on future environmental investment opportunities.
- 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 and electricity) usage.
- 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.



9

Your views count

Your views and opinions are important to us and having had the opportunity to read this report, we would welcome any comments or feedback that you may have. This would assist in our evaluation and future publication of this document.

Telephone: **0191 444 1672**

Email:

BusinessSupport.Improvement@twfire.gov.uk

In writing, address your letter to:

**Business Support and Improvement
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Nissan Way
Barmston Mere
Sunderland
SR5 3QY**

Appendix A - List of abbreviations

ACO	Assistant Chief Officer
ALP	Aerial Ladder Platform
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BTC	Brigade Training Centre
CDDFRS	County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service
CFO	Chief Fire Officer
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazards
COVID-19	Coronavirus
CRMG	Corporate Risk Management Group
CPAD	Community Public Access Defibrillator
CRP	Community Risk Profile
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Scheme
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
ESMCP	Emergency Services' Mobile Communications Programme
ESN	Emergency Services Network
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FOI	Freedom of Information
GHC	Gateshead Housing Company
HART	Hazardous Area Response Team
HAVS	Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome
HEMS	Helicopter Emergency Medical Service
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services
HSC	Home Safety Check
HVP	High Volume Pump
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
IIP	Investors in People
IOC	Initial Operating Capacity
IOSH	Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
JESIP	Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme
JOL	Joint Organisational Learning

KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender+
LOtC	Learning outside the classroom
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
MDT	Mobile Data Terminal
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTA	Marauding Terrorist Attack
MTFS	Medium Term Financial Strategy
NCAF	National Coordination and Advisory Framework
NEAS	North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council
NFRS	Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service
NILO	National Inter-Agency Liaison Officer
NOL	National Operational Learning
NRAT	National Resilience Assurance Team
OAG	Operational Assurance Group
OHU	Occupational Health Unit
PAS	Primary Authority Scheme
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
P&E	Prevention and Education
PDR	Performance and Development Review
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
RBIP	Risk-Based Inspection Programme
RMAD	Risk Management and Assurance Database
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
RoSPA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
RRT	Rapid Relief Team
RVI	Royal Victoria Infirmary
SCH	Sunderland Community Hub
SCSP	Strategic Community Safety Plan
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SOAAR	Statement of Assurance Annual Report
SPF	Strategic Planning Framework
SRB	Strategic Resilience Board
TSC	Technical Services Centre
TRV	Targeted Response Vehicle
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
VRU	Violence Reduction Unit

Statement of Assurance and Annual Report

2019 - 2020



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