



Northamptonshire Commissioner
Fire and Rescue Authority

Efficiency Plan 2019/20

Making Northamptonshire Safer

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. The Governance change.....	3
3. NCC Efficiency Plan 2016-2020.....	3
4. NCFRA Funding.....	3
5. Efficiency Savings 2019/20	5
6. Capital Expenditure.....	6
7. Use of Reserves	6
8. New Emerging Pressures	7
9. Monitoring	7

Making Northamptonshire Safer

1. Introduction

On 24 May 2016 the Minister of State for Policing, Fire, Criminal Justice and Victims, the Rt Hon Mike Penning MP wrote to Fire Authority Chairs outlining the requirements of the efficiency plans needed in order to secure firm four-year funding allocations to 2019-20. A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix A.

As a then County Council fire authority, Northamptonshire fire were not included in the distribution of this fire specific letter but were encompassed within the like requirement placed upon the wider county council by the Minister for Communities and Local Government.

2. The Governance change

Following enabling legislative change set out in the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the Northamptonshire PCC developed, consulted upon and submitted a business case to take over the governance of NFRS, this was approved by Home Office in December 2018 and implemented on the 1st January 2019.

Recognising that NFRS are no longer subject to the county council efficiency plan, this document sets out financial context for NFRS under the new authority (NCFRA), for the remaining year (2019/20) of the current central government's four year period of local authority funding .

3. NCC Efficiency Plan 2016-2020

The county council efficiency plan outlined the strategic direction of the council, and provided financial context, documenting the intention to save £130.68m across the 4 year period 2016-2020.

The 35 page plan incorporated a table of actions and corresponding savings to be undertaken across the whole council. Within this, a savings requirement was placed upon fire and rescue totalling £2.3m across the 4 years, set against an action to undertake a "fundamental review of the fire and rescue service". At the time of agreeing the financial split for the change of governance, NFRS had delivered £1.515m of the £2.3m and were absorbing unfunded nationally negotiated pay increases creating an additional pressure of circa £300k.

4. NCFRA Funding

The Statutory Instrument for the move of governance to the NCFRA included the funding split agreed with NCC, totalling £22.6m (2018/19 values). Due to extreme funding pressures within NCC the transfer of funds did not include the provision for some services embedded within NCC corporate centre, neither was NCC able to transfer any funding for reserves.

Making Northamptonshire Safer

factored into budget setting therefore savings are not quantified within this plan but the examples are included for illustrative purposes.

Enabling Services - The collaboration of recent years between NFRS and Northamptonshire Police, continues to provide recurring efficiency benefits for both organisations through initiatives such as the sharing of estates, joint teams, shared technology. The potential of these initiatives will continue to be developed through the “Enabling Services” workstream being led by the OPFCC but at this stage of development, quantifying further efficiencies would be purely speculative. More focus will however be given to capturing and quantifying costs and efficiencies achieved through fire/police collaboration.

Fleet Strategy 2019-2024 – The fleet strategy outlines how NFRS will overcome the legacy from lack of investment of recent years, key to this is the extension of vehicle life beyond previously established thresholds. This reduces the immediate and medium term capital requirement to more manageable levels and will reduce the associated capital financing revenue costs. In addition, it is proposed that 13 vehicles at ‘end of lease’ will be purchased, in following years, this will produce a revenue efficiency of **circa £58k** for reinvestment in the service.

Volunteers – NFRS is working in collaboration with East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) in establishing a joint volunteering scheme, the members of which will provide valuable support across a number of areas within the service. At the time of writing 60 members of the community are in the process of induction onto the scheme. During this year, there will be continued focus on introducing and developing the use of these volunteers, who will provide additional resourcing that may otherwise have needed to be conventionally funded.

6. Capital Expenditure

The NCFRA Draft Budget 2019/20 sets out a draft capital expenditure programme for 2019 to 2024, the draft figures being subject to further underpinning work within the service in quarter 1. Illustratively however, the draft programme provides for £2.965m in 2019/20, however, it is likely there will be slippage whilst the strategies are finalised. Provision for financing capital financing charges has been included in the revenue budget.

The Governance Framework will ensure appropriate controls are in place and that procurement efficiencies are maximised.

7. Use of Reserves

The NCFRA Draft Budget 2019/20 sets out the reserves strategy for NCFRA, detailing how the authority will develop sufficient reserves across the term of the MTFP, following the transfer of Governance from NCC without reserves. The draft accounts for 2018/19 identify that additional efficiencies were achieved enabling £938k to be transferred into reserves against the planned £700k. The

Making Northamptonshire Safer

requirement to transfer a further £200k in 2019/20 and for the next two financial years remains to enable a stable financial base to be established.

8. New / Emerging Pressures

In November 2018, NFRS underwent inspection by the newly formed Home Office Inspectorate for Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The inspection report, published in June 2019, was balanced in that it recognised both areas of strength and areas requiring improvement.

The NCFRA and the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) have taken the findings of the inspection very seriously wherein an action plan has been published and is being implemented to address the two specific 'areas of concern' documented within the inspection report, with a broader range of improvement actions having been embedded within a revised IRMP.

Some of the improvement actions require additional financial resourcing. It is envisaged that in the current financial year, these will be financed from within existing budgets through in-year efficiencies or where this is not fully achievable, through seeking Authority approval to access reserves. Identified additional funding requirements for future years will be embed in the budget and MTFP planning and approval processes.

9. Monitoring

Delivery against this plan will be monitored within NFRS by the Chief Fire Officer and within NCFRA, by the Chief Finance Officer with scrutiny provided through the Accountability Board.

