



Cllr Gill Mercer
c/o Mr James Edmunds
Democratic Services Assistant Manager
Northamptonshire County Council
One Angel Square
Angel Street
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30th September 2020

Dear Gill,

Following the publication of your response to my Fire and Rescue Statement 2019, I am pleased to respond to the Panel in accordance in accordance with the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011 Section 12 Paragraph 4(a).

This is the second Annual Report for the Fire and Rescue Service that I have been responsible for and I am pleased that all the work we have undertaken to ensure that governance and scrutiny of the work of the service has been well integrated into the Office of the Northamptonshire Police and Fire and Commissioner has been positive and successful.

As I briefed panel members, the Fire and Rescue service was subject to a further visit by HMICFRS. The inspection team found that despite the ongoing tight financial constraints, the tangible improvements the Service had made had mitigated the risks to public safety that they identified in their original inspection and there was no longer any requirement to carry out any further revisits on these causes of concern. This was excellent news and provides us with a great deal of optimism for the future as we rebuild and invest in the service.

In relation to the comments in relation to the panel's comments in relation to safety-critical training and the impact of this issue on operational effectiveness. I clarified that this reference at the meeting as it related to an outcome of the original inspection in 2018. At that point NFRS had not been effective enough at documenting that safety-critical training had been done. This matter had since been addressed and HMICFRS no longer saw it as an area of concern for our Fire and Rescue Service. We will amend the statement to reflect this and publish on my website accordingly to reflect the current position.

We will continue to focus on continuing on our improvement journey and shaping the service over the next five years. The increased financial stability that has been achieved by the service under the governance of my office will help with long-term planning as the Chief Fire Officer works to further improve average response times towards a target of 10 minutes and invest in new equipment that enables firefighters to perform their jobs to the best of their ability.

As Panel members will know, at the year of the 2019-20 financial year there was a £244K underspend, which has also given NCFRA the opportunity to build general reserves to the guideline level of 4% of revenue expenditure. This was a key priority for me as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and underlines the amount of hard work we have undertaken to integrate the work of the Fire and Rescue Service and ensure its future financial stability.

The achievements we have been able to deliver have helped support the work of NFRS as they continue to work to support and protect our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to thank the Panel for their support and oversight over the last twelve months and I am sure we can continue to work together to support and develop the work of our Fire and Rescue Service during these unprecedented times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Mold', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Stephen Mold
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire

C.C. James Edmunds