



Statement of Assurance 2020/21

Chief Fire Officer
Stuart Ruff

August 2021



INTRODUCTION “STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE”



Purpose

Fire and Rescue Authorities must provide both local communities and the Government with an annual statement of assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. This means that Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) must demonstrate that it is doing what the Government expects of it, as laid down in the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#), and that it is delivering the local Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The National Framework was last updated in 2018.

This statement of assurance covers the period April 2020 to March 2021.

Norfolk's Context

In Norfolk, the Fire and Rescue Authority is Norfolk County Council which governs and operates the Fire and Rescue Service as a service in the council's Community and Environmental Services Directorate. Our Chief Fire Officer is a member of the Departmental Management Team with the responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service and is a Director of Norfolk Safety CIC.

The type of fire and rescue service that is operated is influenced by the nature of the area in which it works:

- Increasing and ageing population
- Fifth largest county in England
- Second most rural county with one of the lowest population densities in England
- Relatively flat county prone to flooding and coastal tidal surges
- Changing emergency call profile - as well as fires we also attend a wide variety of incidents like rescues from water and road traffic collisions
- Norfolk's ethnic make-up is characterised by a predominantly White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British or Irish population (92.9%). (A further 0.1% are Gypsy/Irish Travellers and 3.5% Other White.)
- The proportion of people with an ethnic group other than White is 3.5%, and this varies from 1.4% in North Norfolk to 9.2% in Norwich.
- There are around 160 languages spoken in Norfolk. English is not the first language of around 12,400 school children in the county.
- Norfolk's population could rise by an estimated 60,600 over the decade to 2028 - this is an increase of 6.7%



907,760 population
18.4% aged over 65



90 miles of coastline
250 miles of navigable inland waterways



6,256 miles of roads



More than 50% of the population live in "Urban" areas



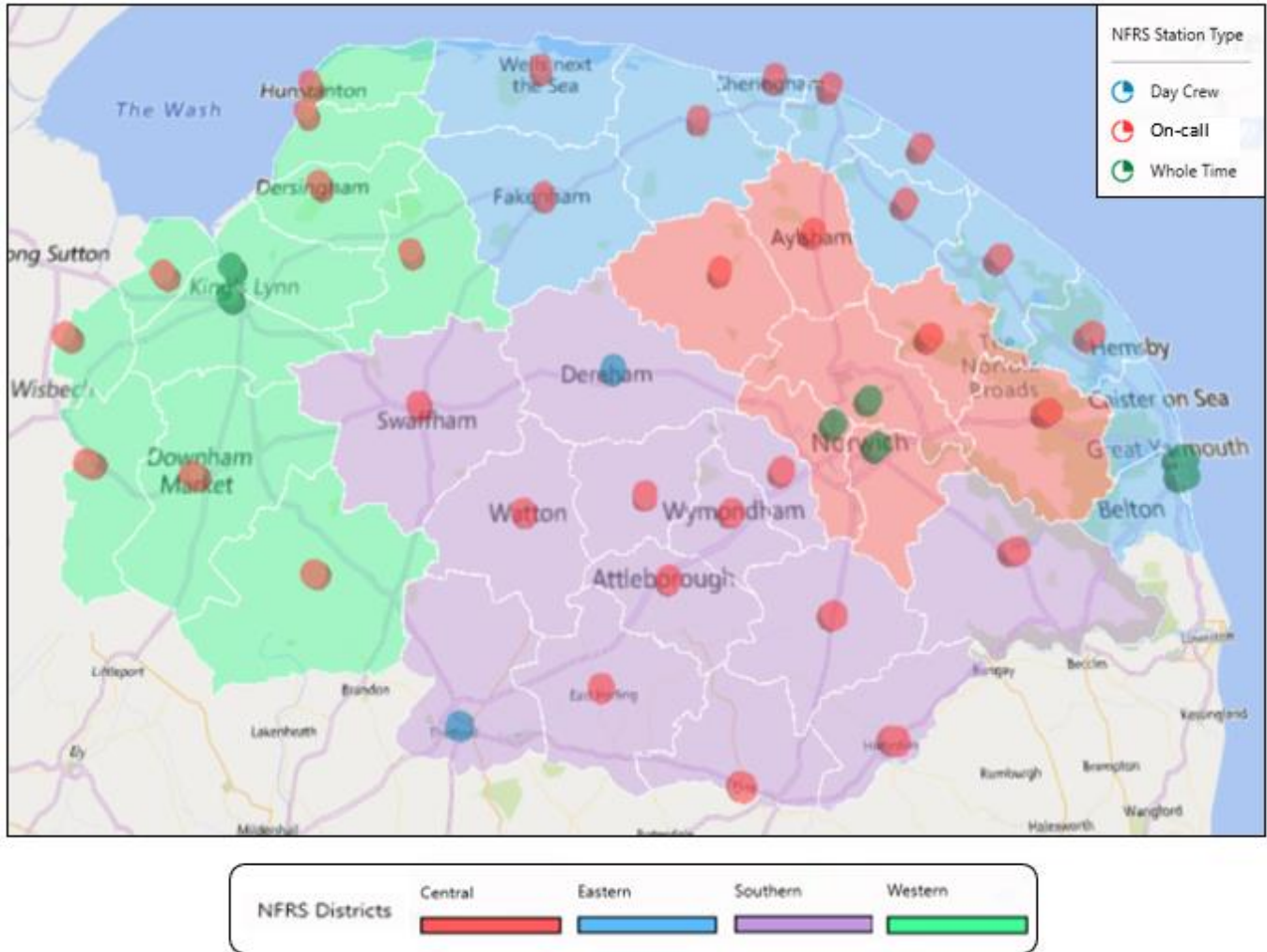
93% (approx.) land area rural

An extensive profile of Norfolk can be found in [Norfolk's Story](#).

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Resources


There are 42 fire stations across the county. Carrow and Sprowston in Norwich, and King's Lynn South are wholtime stations crewed by firefighters 24/7. Four stations have a mix of wholtime and on-call firefighters (Earlham, Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and King's Lynn North), two stations have a mix of Day Crew and on-call firefighters (Dereham and Thetford) and 33 stations are crewed by on-call firefighters in market towns and villages. On-call firefighters are staff whose main job is outside the Fire and Rescue Service, but they are available on-call to respond to emergencies in their area.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY




The Service has a variety of fire engines to tackle a range of different emergencies. For example, heavy rescue pumps are equipped to respond to road traffic collisions and Technical Rescue Units attend water rescue and large animal rescue incidents. The off-road 4x4 fire engines are used for flooding incidents, heathland/forest fires, firefighting and rescues at height.


Our fleet of specialist vehicles also includes two environmental protection units, a control vehicle, a water foam unit, three aerial ladder platforms and a driver training vehicle. The Service also hosts a team of Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) personnel and vehicles that are trained to respond to national, regional or major incidents. We are also one of the few services that have this specialist team, who can also respond to a terrorist threat should such an incident occur.



Firefighters
273 Wholetime
451 On-call



86 Non-uniformed



24 Control room

Employee full time equivalent at end of March 2020



OUR VISION AND MISSION

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is at the heart of protecting communities.
We exist to make our county as safe as possible.

Our mission is to make Norfolk a safer place through:

PREVENTING fires and other emergencies

PROTECTING people, buildings and the environment

RESPONDING to fires and other emergencies when they arise

We will deliver our vision by...

Having a service that remains relevant, capable and agile to protect Norfolk as best it can

Supporting our communities to reduce risk by educating and advising them

Responding to incidents, ensuring we have the best people, equipment and technology to be able to do this

We will support Norfolk by...

- ✓ Educating adults, children, partners and businesses so they all better understand the part they can play in reducing risk.
- ✓ Understanding the diverse needs of our communities, using local knowledge and risk mapping based on current data.
- ✓ Being prepared for the unexpected, through continued staff training opportunities, investment in our service and flexibility to take on different duties with utmost professionalism.
- ✓ Being a trusted voice. We will work with businesses and residents to help them reduce the risk of incidents occurring, whether at work, at home, in public places or on the move.
- ✓ Take enforcement action where attempts to work with people have not resulted in the safest course of action being followed to ensure the ongoing safety of everyone.

Our priorities and action will be driven by...

- ✓ We will do what matters – we will have clear strategic priorities and plans, based on evidence and need.
- ✓ We will do the right thing – we will have honest and thoughtful conversations and use our expertise to take the right course of action whatever the circumstances.
- ✓ We will adhere to our corporate values and behaviours to ensure we work as one inclusive team.
- ✓ We will show compassion and empathy with our audiences, supporting them in the most appropriate ways.

IRMP



Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)



The IRMP sets out the risks and issues that the Fire and Rescue Service will need to respond to over the next three years and how it will do it.

The IRMP is the single most important document for the Fire and Rescue Service as it shows what the Service will be doing and why. It is also one of the means by which the public can hold the Service to account.

Through 2019/20 we drafted and consulted on the new IRMP 2020-23, with approval being agreed within the period.

NFRS consulted on a draft plan from October 2019 to December 2019 (through a Member Reference Group and public consultation) and considered all the responses received. Elected members made decisions about which proposals to adopt and our IRMP 2020-2023 was approved in January 2020. [Download the IRMP 2020-23 \(PDF\) from our community risk management plan webpage.](#)

Collaborative working

We have an established record of working in partnership to deliver effective and efficient services. This includes:

- Fulfilling our duties outlined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 by working as part of the Norfolk Resilience Forum to maintain and develop Norfolk's Community Risk Register, plan the response to major incidents and emergencies in the county, and carry out Multi-Agency training exercises as part of the preparation of an effective response.
- Participating in over the border mutual aid agreements via the National Resilience Programme, which shares specialist response assets across the country. Alongside these wider arrangements, we have local agreements in place with neighbouring fire and rescue services (Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk) to ensure the fastest response to emergency calls and to share specialist assets.
- Working with other Fire and Rescues Services to improve interoperability. We are part of the East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium, a group of fire and rescue services that are working together to standardise control room practices so that we can support each other in the event of major incidents. We make use of national operational and tactical guidance. We will be changing our communication systems as part of the national emergency services mobile communications programme (ESMCP).
- Increasing our collaboration with other emergency services. Our shared Communication and Control Room with Norfolk Constabulary allows us to share information directly with our emergency service partners. We can also share operational intelligence and information on a daily basis directly between the two organisations. Managers are able to quickly offer advice and support to each other and share joint situational awareness with immediate effect due to working in the same building. Further evidence of our collaborative work can be found in the annual [Police and Fire Collaboration Report](#).

ANNUAL PLAN ON A PAGE



Our “Plan on a Page” summarises our service delivery model. For 2020/21 it was:

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is at the heart of protecting communities. **We exist to make our county as safe as possible**

**The future of Norfolk
will be safer through the work that we do.**

Our mission is to make Norfolk a safer place through:

- **Preventing** fires and other emergencies
- **Protecting** people, buildings and the environment
- **Responding** to fires and other emergencies when they arise
- Looking after and investing in our **People**

We will deliver our vision and mission by:

- Reducing fires, improving home, road and water safety
- Working with partners to support vulnerable people and reducing the risks and effects of fire
- Promoting the installations of smoke alarms
- Working with the Police to reduce arson
- Providing advice to organisations on how to reduce the risk and impact from fire and enforce fire safety legislation
- Working with other enforcement agencies to share information on risk and to take joint enforcement action.
- Ensuring operational readiness and firefighter safety
- Improving the availability and response times of our fire engines
- Learning from operational incidents
- Improving the diversity of our workforce
- Keeping our staff safe

We know we are delivering success when:

- We have attended less than 400 accidental domestic dwelling fires, 25 injuries and 0 deaths, less than 630 arson incidents and there are less than 347 people killed or seriously injured on the roads.
- We have reduced the % of fires attended with no smoke detector fitted
- We have attended less than 181 accidental non-domestic dwelling fires
- The % of time first fire engines are available is greater than 90%
- Our attendance times at ‘Fires where life may be at risk’ will be better than 80% within 10 minutes
- Our attendance times at ‘Other emergencies where life may be at risk’ will be greater than 80% within 13 minutes.
- The diversity of applications has improved
- The number of over 7-day RIDDOR events has reduced
- Number of customer complaints has reduced.

COVID RESPONSE



In August 2020, HMICFRS were commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect how fire and rescue services in England were responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtually, HMICFRS inspected England's 45 fire and rescue services from September to November 2020, focusing on their response during the initial outbreak of the pandemic. The inspections examined these areas:

- what is working well and what is being learnt.
- how the fire and rescue sector is responding to the COVID-19 crisis.
- how fire and rescue services are dealing with the problems they face; and
- what changes are likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

NFRS was inspected between 19th and 30th October 2020. HMICFRS findings were published on 22nd January 2021. The following strengths were recognised by HMICFRS in their report:

PREVENTION

- We continued to provide prevention (and protection) activities using a risk-based approach in line with NFCC guidance.
- We introduced a new way of assessing the risks for vulnerable people in the community and continued to target individuals identified as being at an increased risk from fire, including those at increased risk as a result of the pandemic.
- We continued offering face to face safe and well visits on a risk-assessed basis and provided staff with suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) to do so.

PROTECTION

- We reviewed premises risk assessments, recognising the risk to the public from fire can increase as businesses and other premises change their working environments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We continued to respond to complaints and to issue alteration notices, enforcement notices and prohibition notices. We also continued responding to statutory building control consultations.
- We continued to engage with those responsible for fire safety in high-risk premises with cladding.

RESPONSE

- The overall availability of crewed fire engines was better during the pandemic than it was during the same period the previous year. Between 1 April and 30 June 2020, NFRS's average fire engine availability was 92.2 percent compared with 83.4 percent during the same period in 2019.
- Our average response time to fires remained broadly the same during the pandemic compared with the same period in 2019.
- We had good arrangements in place to make sure that our control room had enough staff during the pandemic.



PEOPLE

- Staff wellbeing was a clear priority for the service during the pandemic. We proactively identified wellbeing problems and responded to any concerns and further needs.
- Senior leaders actively promoted wellbeing services and encouraged staff to discuss any worries they had.
- Staff survey respondents told us that they could access services to support their mental wellbeing if needed.
- Staff most at risk of COVID-19 were identified effectively, including those from a BAME background and those with underlying health problems.
- We made sure that firefighters were competent to do their work during the pandemic. This included keeping up to date with mandatory firefighter fitness requirements.
- We updated the way we dealt with staff absences to help it better manage staff wellbeing and health and safety and make more effective decisions on how to allocate work.

LOGISTICS

- We assessed the risks of new work to make sure staff had the skills and equipment needed to work safely and effectively
- We provided our workforce with suitable PPE on time. We participated in the national fire sector scheme to procure PPE, which allowed us to achieve value for money.
- We made robust and realistic calculations of the extra costs faced during the pandemic. Between 1 March and 30 June 2020, our main extra costs were £103,000 for staff supporting the NRF, £60,500 for PPE and £20,000 for cleaning and decontamination supplies. Where possible, we exploited opportunities to make savings and used them to mitigate the financial risks we had identified. We fully understand the effect this will have on our previously agreed budget and anticipated savings.

PLANNING

- In line with good governance, our service had a pandemic flu plan and business continuity plans in place, which were in date. These plans were activated and regularly reviewed to reflect the changing situation and our learning during the pandemic. We produced and implemented a COVID-specific 'concept of operations' which guided our organisational response.
- We continued to provide core statutory functions throughout the pandemic, in line with advice from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).
- HMICFRS referenced the good practice of issuing of guidance across the frameworks to inform staff on how to deliver during the pandemic.
- Most staff survey respondents told us that the service provided regular and relevant communication to all staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES & COLLABORATIVE WORKING

- Our service carried out the following new activities: ambulance driving; training non-service personnel to drive ambulances; delivering essential items to vulnerable people; fitting face masks to be used by NHS and clinical care staff working with COVID-19 patients; delivering PPE and other medical supplies to NHS and care facilities; movement of deceased at a temporary mortuary, packing/repacking food supplies for vulnerable people; prevention and control training for care homes, including hand hygiene; creating PPE guidance and procedure videos; protecting vehicles in dangerous positions; supporting pedestrian safety on highways; and gaining entry to private property to provide access for the ambulance service.
- We consulted locally to implement the tripartite agreement with the FBU, the Fire Officers Association and the Fire and Rescue Services Association. Other unions were engaged, including UNISON, if their members were asked to do extra work, including work under the tripartite agreement. There were extra requests for work by partner agencies. We engaged with all unions during the pandemic.
- We were an active member of the NRF during the pandemic. As part of the NRF's response to COVID-19, our service was a member of the strategic co-ordinating group, tactical co-ordinating group, Multi-Agency fusion group, PPE distribution group, and communities and vulnerable group. The service was able to allocate suitably qualified staff to participate in these groups without affecting its core duties.
- The fire and rescue authority chair and the service maintained a constructive relationship. The service regularly updated the fire and rescue authority, including through weekly reports to the chair.

AGILE & ADAPTABLE

- We changed how we operated during the pandemic. For example, introducing smarter, flexible working arrangements and virtual communication platforms.
- We could quickly implement changes to how we operate. This allowed our staff to work flexibly and efficiently during the pandemic.
- Our senior leaders had positive feedback from staff on how they were engaged with during the pandemic. As a result, the service plans to adopt these changes into our usual procedures and consider how they can be developed further to help promote a sustainable change to our working culture.
- The service had enough resources available to respond to the level of demand during the COVID-19 pandemic and to re-allocate resources where necessary to support the work of its partner organisations.
- Arrangements put in place to monitor staff performance across the service were effective. This meant the service could be sure its staff were making the best contribution that they reasonably could during this period.
- As well as performing their statutory functions, wholtime and on-call firefighters undertook extra activities, including those under the tripartite agreement.



LOCAL vs NATIONAL COMPARISON

In general terms HMICFRS found:

- There was strong Multi-Agency working in every area, supported and facilitated by LRFs
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Positive at NFRS
- All services maintained their ability to respond to fires and other emergencies
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Confirmed at NFRS
- The prioritisation of response was, in some cases, to the detriment of protection and prevention activity
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Not the case at NFRS
- Access to data on vulnerable individuals from partners varied
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Not highlighted as an issue at NFRS
- The oversight and scrutiny of fire and rescue authorities varied
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Positive at NFRS
- Some services were more prepared for the pandemic than others
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Positive at NFRS
- The fire and rescue sector was able to come together effectively during the pandemic
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Positive across Sector
- The intent behind the tripartite agreement was pragmatic, but it was too prescriptive in practice
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Local relations positive for NFRS (and management approach positively view)
- On-call firefighters further demonstrated their enormous value to fire and rescue services
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Recognised at NFRS
- Services could have done more to ensure the efficient and productive use of their staff
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Not identified as a specific issue for NFRS
- Most services put effective measures in place to protect control room functions
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Positive at NFRS
- More could have been done by services to consider if their risk profile changed as a result of the pandemic
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Some positive comments but highlighted more could have been done
- The additional costs services incurred when responding to the pandemic were mainly covered by government grants
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Positive at NFRS
- Wellbeing provision offered to staff during COVID-19 was good but varied
 - Inspectorates' assessment of NFRS: Very positive at NFRS



EEAST AND NHS SUPPORT

2020 Lockdowns:

Responded to large incidents over the period providing a good service to our communities. Our service undertook extra duties including:

- Ambulance driving
- The delivery of essential items to vulnerable persons
- Movement of deceased (planned and structure put in place – not required in Lockdown 1)
- Face fitting masks to be used by NHS and clinical care staff working with COVID-19 patients
- Delivering PPE and other medical supplies to NHS and care facilities
- Driving ambulances, not on blue lights (excluding COVID -19 patients) to outpatient appointments or to receive urgent care
- Training for non-service personnel to drive ambulances (not on blue-lights)
- Delivering infection, prevention and control training packages for care homes including hand hygiene, PPE guidance and procedures and supporting care home staff testing
- Supporting Norfolk Constabulary with fending off on major routes
- Gaining entry for the ambulance service

49 staff completed the two-day training course on Ambulance Driving in April 2020. A further 24 wholetime and 1 additional on-call firefighter complete their training in May 2020 in case of increased demand due to the ongoing pandemic. This meant a total of **73 staff supported**.

300 EEAST ambulance shifts completed in the first month (May) by the first group of seconded staff (24 on-call firefighters)

The **2 cohorts complete a total of 4 month-long shifts** ending in July 2020. We provided a total of **982 shifts for EEAST, a total of 13,215 hours of work** through the April to July 2020 period.

536 NHS students were trained across the EEAST region to drive ambulances in this six-week period. This equated to more than 8,500 hours of driver training by fire and police staff. Norfolk's contribution to this total was **184 students (additional drivers) trained over 7 weeks**.

1000s of pieces of vital medical supplies were transported around Norfolk for the NHS.

2021 Lockdown:

A staff bank was set up and managed by a Group Manager to assist NHS with a range of activities including Mask Face-Fitting, Swabbing and Vaccination Support.

- 17 staff from Central District
- 20 staff from Eastern District
- 27 staff from Southern District
- 25 staff from Western District

A total of **89 staff Volunteered for NFRS NHS bank support**



The NFRS NHS bank support covered **3 surgeries and 3 hospitals**:

Jan 2021

Face Fit and Swabbing 82 Shifts 984 Hours

Vaccination Support 12 Shifts 144 Hours

Feb 2021

Face Fit and Swabbing 195 Shifts 2,340 Hours

Vaccination Support 149 Shifts 1,788 Hours

March 2021

Face Fit and Swabbing 118 Shifts 1,416 Hours

Vaccination Support 37 Shifts 444 Hours

April 2021

Face Fit and Swabbing 35 Shifts 420 Hours

Face Fit and Swabbing totals = 430 Shifts and 5160 Hours assistance

Vaccination Support total = 198 Shifts and 2376 Hours assistance

Total training days initially = 25 Shifts

Each surgery we supported carried out between 500-700 vaccinations per day. We were present at these surgeries for 62 days therefore we could say we assisted in between 31,000 – 43,400 vaccinations. That is not including the vaccination hubs at the hospitals we supported.

We also supported the mortuary pathway / movement of deceased with respect and empathy during this Lockdown – we transported 746 deceased between Feb 2021 to April 2021.

FINANCIAL ASSURANCE



NFRS Budget & Financial Management

NFRS operates on a revenue budget which in 2020/21 was £28.4 million net, 7% of the Council's overall net revenue budget. This equates to £31.29 (£32.96 2019/20) per head of population including capital charges, £28.46 (£28.88 2019/20) per head excluding capital charges.



£23.09 NFRS
Firefighter cost per
person per year
(£24.53 National cost)
NFRS service cost per head
of the population is £31.29

The service has an approved capital programme of £10.9m for 21/22 & £4.8m for 22/23, with the largest spend relating to fire appliances to be phased in over 21/22.

2021 with the COVID pandemic provided a challenging operating year within which to operate. However, the service managed its service delivery against these restrictions and provided additional support to the NHS.

Financial performance for the year resulted in a £0.317m overspend at 1.1% of budget and was mainly attributed to COVID pandemic costs.

PLANNED ECONOMIES

As we look to 2021/22, we are planning economies throughout our structure:

Service Level

- Establishing Head of Capability as Green Book post
- Re-evaluating the Police collaboration post

Capability

- Changing staffing structure to maximise efficiency
- Reducing equipment budget
- Reducing fuel budget
- Reducing printing budget, licence and subs
- Reducing externally provided staff training costs
- Reducing staff vacancy advertising, subsistence and conference costs
- Establishing Technical Support Officer role as Green Book
- Reducing vehicle leasing costs
- Moving HR, Pay and EDI to corporate shared services (efficiency)

Prevent & Protect

- Reducing community fire safety enabling function

Response

- Removing operational catering provision

Planning & Performance

- Moving H&S to corporate shared services (efficiency)



Financial Management

The Council's [Constitution](#) sets out the Council's decision-making framework, including delegation arrangements. The Constitution includes Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which set out how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed. Updated Financial Regulations were approved by Cabinet in April 2019. All Responsible Budget Officers/ Management of NFRS are made fully aware of their duties with checks and oversight by the Fire Services Procurement Manager and Finance Officer.

The County Council is legally required to provide an annual report, the Statement of Accounts, on how it spends its money. As the Fire Authority, the Council includes in the Statement of Accounts details of the NFRS financial position. The accounts, along with the Fire Fighters Pension Fund Accounts, are audited to confirm their accuracy.

Following the signing of the Statement of Accounts and the conclusion of the annual audit, our external auditors write an Annual Audit Letter to the Council. The letter summarises the findings of the auditors and formally concludes the audit.

The latest Statement of Accounts and audit letters are available on the [County Council's website](#). These confirm that the budget has been managed in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is being used economically, efficiently and effectively.

If you would like further details about where the Service spends its money, such as expenditure on staff and expenses and where we spend over £500, this is available on the [Council's Open Data website](#).

GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE



National Governance

In January 2016 responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services moved from the Department of Communities and Local Government to the Home Office. The Home Office are also responsible for policing and the move supports the Government's commitment to deliver greater joint working between the police and fire and rescue services. This commitment is further underpinned by The Policing and Crime Act (2017), this legislation now places a statutory duty on emergency services to consider closer working where it represents best value. This act also introduced new provisions for a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to act as a fire and rescue authority for that area. During 2018/19, NCC and NFRS was subject to consideration from the PCC to take on fire governance in Norfolk, however, following public consultation the PCC decided not to submit its business case.

Democratic Accountability

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is one of the services provided by Norfolk County Council (NCC) which acts as the Fire and Rescue Authority. The County Council has a [Constitution](#) which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. It includes clear communication protocols and clearly defines roles and responsibilities.

On a regular basis, the County Council's Cabinet review the performance of the Fire and Rescue service, its financial position and risks that have been identified. County Councillors also play a key role in shaping the long term development of the Service including approving the [Integrated Risk Management Plan \(IRMP\)](#).

During 2019/20, the Council's governance arrangements changed from a Committee system to a Cabinet system of governance. Until May 2019, oversight of the Fire and Rescue service was the responsibility of the Communities Committee. Since May 2019, under the Cabinet system of Governance, day to day oversight is the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships, Cllr Margaret Dewsbury. The Infrastructure and Development Committee also has a role in reviewing and developing policies and strategies.

A Scrutiny Committee also forms a key part of the democratic checks and balances of the Cabinet system of governance. The Committee is able to review or scrutinise decisions taken by the Executive and to make reports to the Cabinet or Full Council. The roles of Cabinet, Full Council, Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees are set out in the Council's Constitution.

The IRMP forms part of the Council's Policy Framework and therefore is considered and approved by Full Council. The IRMP for 2020-2023 was finalised during 2019/20. As a result of Government lockdown restrictions for Covid-19, and the subsequent pausing of the Council's public meetings, the IRMP was approved by the Head of Paid Service using powers set out in the Constitution. This followed on from discussions at public meetings of Cabinet and Select Committee.



Service Management

The Chief Fire Officer is accountable to the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services. Under the Council's scheme of delegated powers, the Chief Fire Officer has authority to exercise the council's functions relating to fire prevention, firefighting, fire safety, explosives and petroleum licensing and the functions conferred on the local authority under Article 25 of the Fire Safety Order 2005.

The Chief Fire Officer is supported by a Senior Management Team comprised of senior officers from the Fire and Rescue Service. Decisions are taken in accordance with the scheme of delegation set out in the Council's Constitution. The scheme of delegation allows officers to take decisions on behalf of the fire authority.

Governance Standards

Norfolk County Council is responsible for putting in place effective systems for the governance of its affairs, ensuring services are delivered properly and legally and that any associated risks are managed. The [Code of Corporate Governance](#) sets out the governance standards.

ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE



Performance Management Framework

NFRS operates within the County Council's corporate performance framework. A set of 'vital signs' for each service have been produced which provide transparency and assurance on the health of key services. The vital signs for NFRS are 'Emergency Response Standards (ERS)' and 'Percentage of time that on-call first fire engines are available to respond to emergencies'. These are regularly monitored by department management teams and County Councillors through the democratic process, with reports published on our website ([Cabinet Committee Papers](#)).

In accordance with the corporate performance framework, our Service Management Team monitor a broader dashboard of indicators and escalate issues to County Councillors if required. Some of the indicators are former national indicators that we can compare with other fire and rescue services and others are locally determined. An overview of our performance over the past 4 years can be found in the next section.

Performance 2017/18 to 2020/21

The Government collate [national statistics](#) about all fire and rescue services.

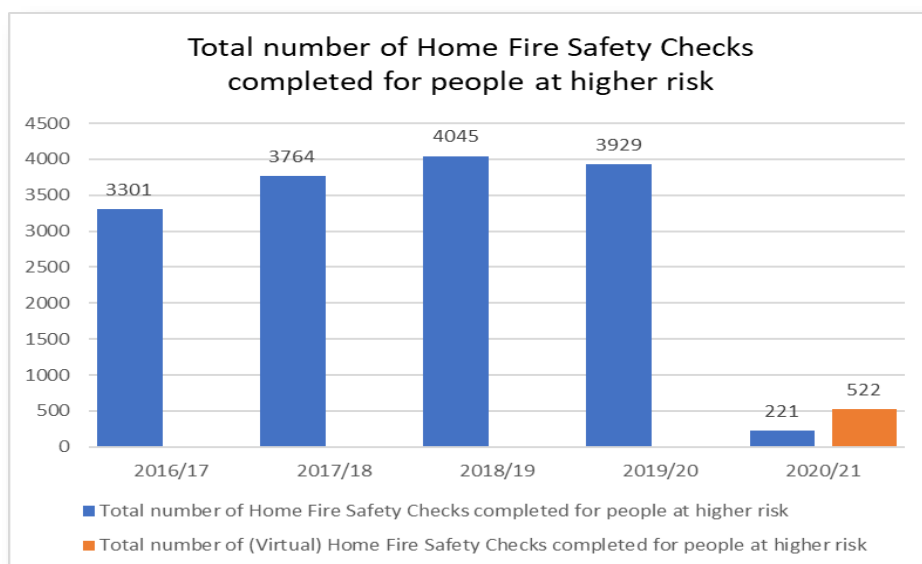
Priorities

We publish an annual Service Delivery Plan which sets out targets which will deliver against our key priorities:

- Reducing fires, improving road and water safety
- Ensuring operational readiness and firefighter safety
- Improving the availability and response times of our fire engines
- Developing a diverse and high performing workforce

Prevent

Covid 19 heavily impacted on our ability to deliver the range of Prevention activities we had planned to do. We amended our practices to deliver Home Fire Safety Checks via telephone where possible, but all activities were impeded by the Lockdowns and restrictions on social interactions.



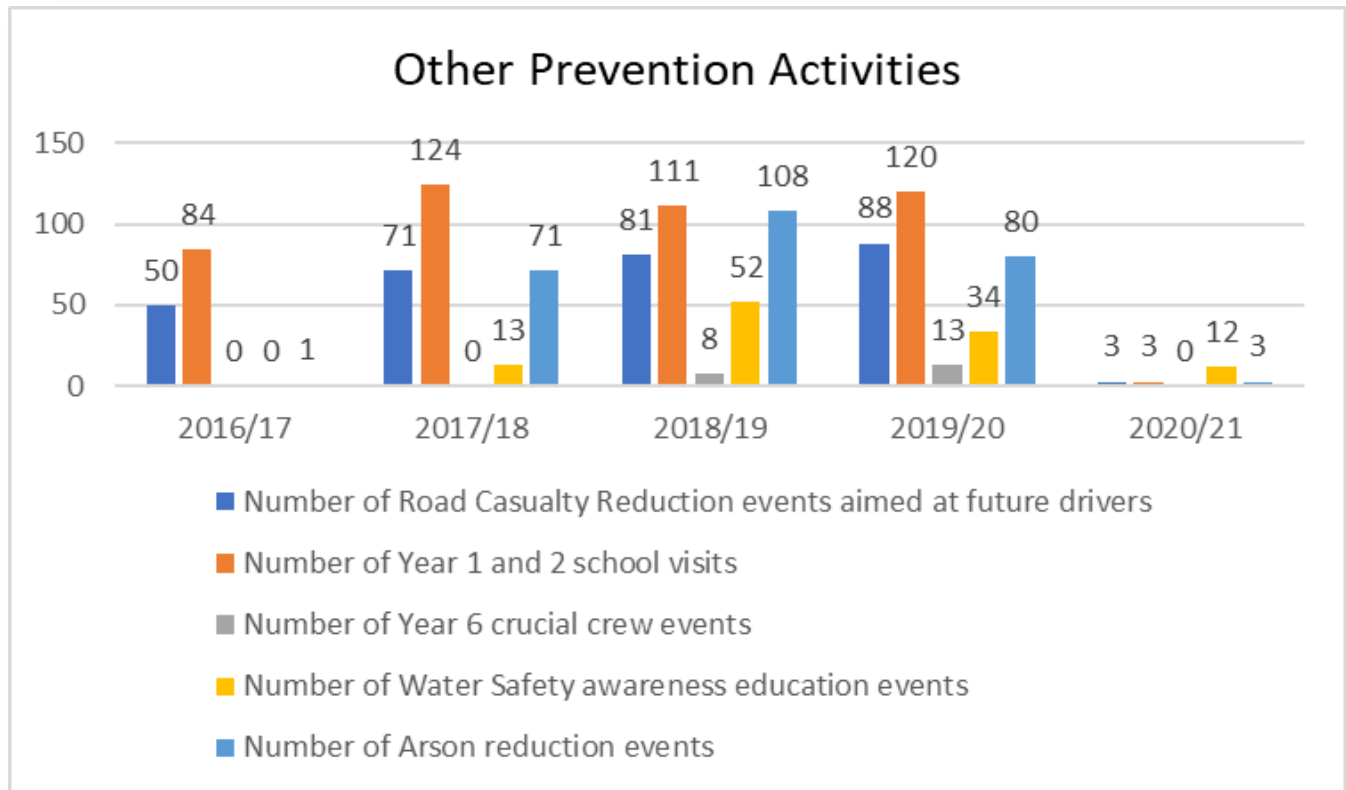


Total number of home fire safety checks completed for people at higher risk:

- Year 2016-2017: 3301
- Year 2017-2018: 3764
- Year 2018-2019: 4045
- Year 2019-2020: 3929
- Year 2020-2021: 221

Total number of virtual home fire safety checks completed for people at higher risk:

- Year 2020-2021: 522



Number of Road Casualty Reduction events aimed at future drivers:

- Year 2016-2017: 50
- Year 2017-2018: 71
- Year 2018-2019: 81
- Year 2019-2020: 88
- Year 2020-2021: 3

Number of Year 1 and 2 school visits:

- Year 2016-2017: 84
- Year 2017-2018: 124
- Year 2018-2019: 111
- Year 2019-2020: 120
- Year 2020-2021: 3



Number of Year 6 Crucial Crew events:

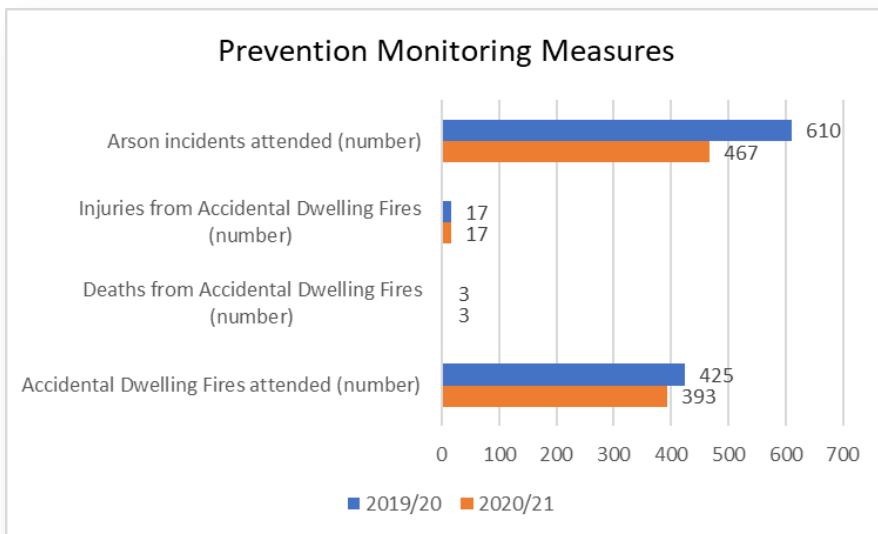
- Year 2016-2017: 0
- Year 2017-2018: 0
- Year 2018-2019: 8
- Year 2019-2020: 13
- Year 2020-2021: 0

Number of water safety awareness education events:

- Year 2016-2017: 0
- Year 2017-2018: 13
- Year 2018-2019: 52
- Year 2019-2020: 34
- Year 2020-2021: 12

Number of arson reduction events:

- Year 2016-2017: 1
- Year 2017-2018: 71
- Year 2018-2019: 108
- Year 2019-2020: 80
- Year 2020-2021: 3



Covid 19 may also have had an impact on the number of arson incidents and the number of accidental dwelling fires. 2020/21 recorded the same number of injuries and deaths from accidental dwelling fires (17 and 3 respectively)

Arson incidents attended:

- Year 2019-2020: 610
- Year 2020-2021: 467

Injuries from accidental dwelling fires (number):

- Year 2019-2020: 17
- Year 2020-2021: 17

Deaths from accidental dwelling fires (number):

- Year 2019-2020: 3
- Year 2020-2021: 3

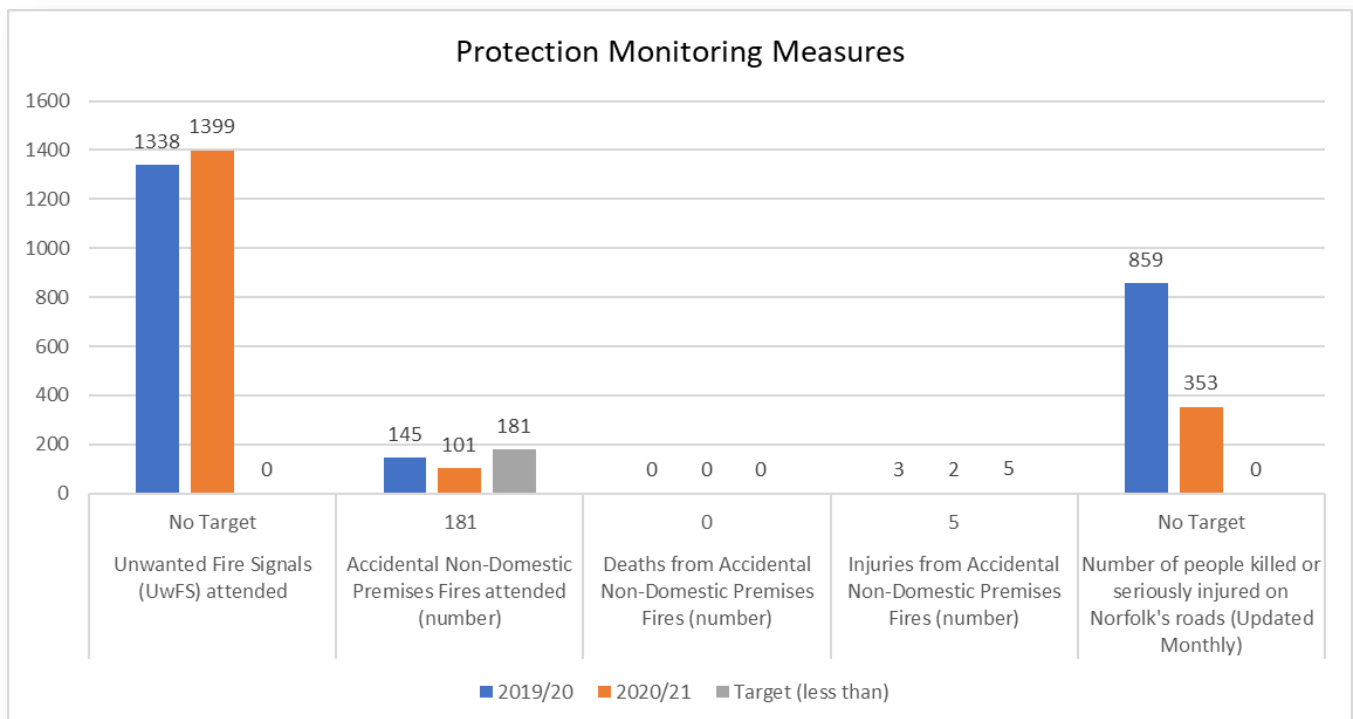


Accidental dwelling fires attended (number):

- Year 2019-2020: 425
- Year 2020-2021: 393

Protect

- Carried out 370 Fire Safety audit visits of non-domestic premises to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations (2019/20 was 975).
- Carried out 41 post fire investigations (38 inspections and 3 audits), supporting business resilience, which includes enforcement and prosecutions for serious cases (2019/20 was 47).
- Maintained up-to-date files of the risks at over 600 non-domestic premises so that if an incident did occur, we would have the information needed to deal with the event as safely as possible, thus reducing the risks for our firefighters and the public.



Unwanted fire signals (UwFS) attended:

- Year 2019-2020: 1338
- Year 2020-2021: 1399

Accidental non-domestic premises fires attended (number):

- Year 2019-2020: 145
- Year 2020-2021: 101
- Target (less than): 181

Deaths from accidental non-domestic premises fires (number):

- Year 2019-2020: 0
- Year 2020-2021: 0
- Target (less than): 0



Injuries from accidental non-domestic premises fires (number):

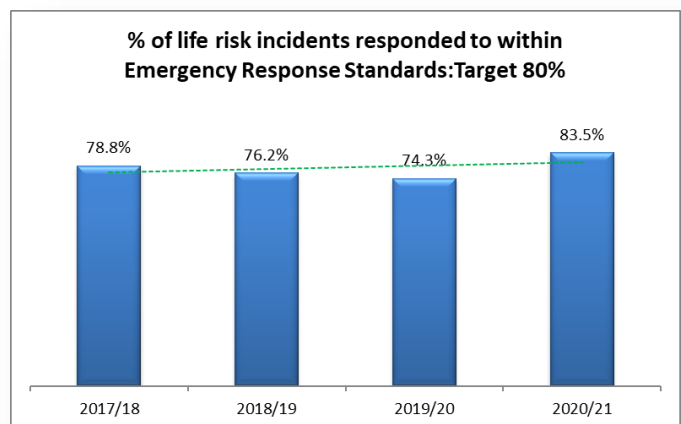
- Year 2019-2020: 3
- Year 2020-2021: 2
- Target (less than): 5

Number of people killed or seriously injured on Norfolk's roads (updated monthly):

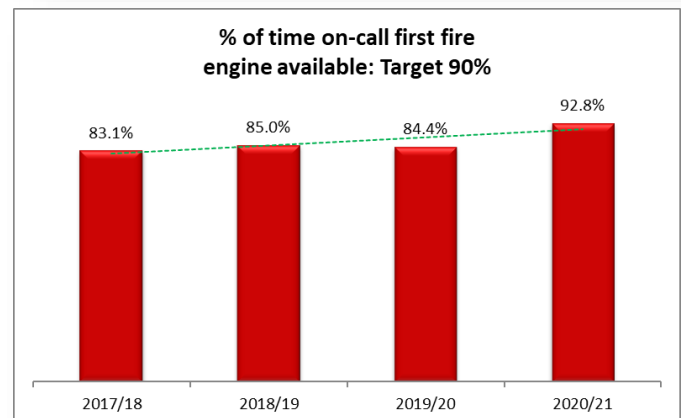
- Year 2019-2020: 859
- Year 2020-2021: 353

Response

During 2020/21 we aimed to get to 80% of life risk incidents within our Emergency Response Standards (how quickly we should attend an incident) and achieved this on 83.5%* of occasions. We reviewed our methodology for reporting on this in 2020/21 and as a result we will be able to better evaluate risk mitigation activity for more remote locations through our performance framework and target setting for 2021/22.



Our on-call first fire engines were available and ready to respond to an emergency 92.8% of the time against a target of 90%. This is an improvement on last year's figure of 84.4%. It is worth noting that availability was improved as a result of Covid 19 lockdowns, as more On Call staff were available.



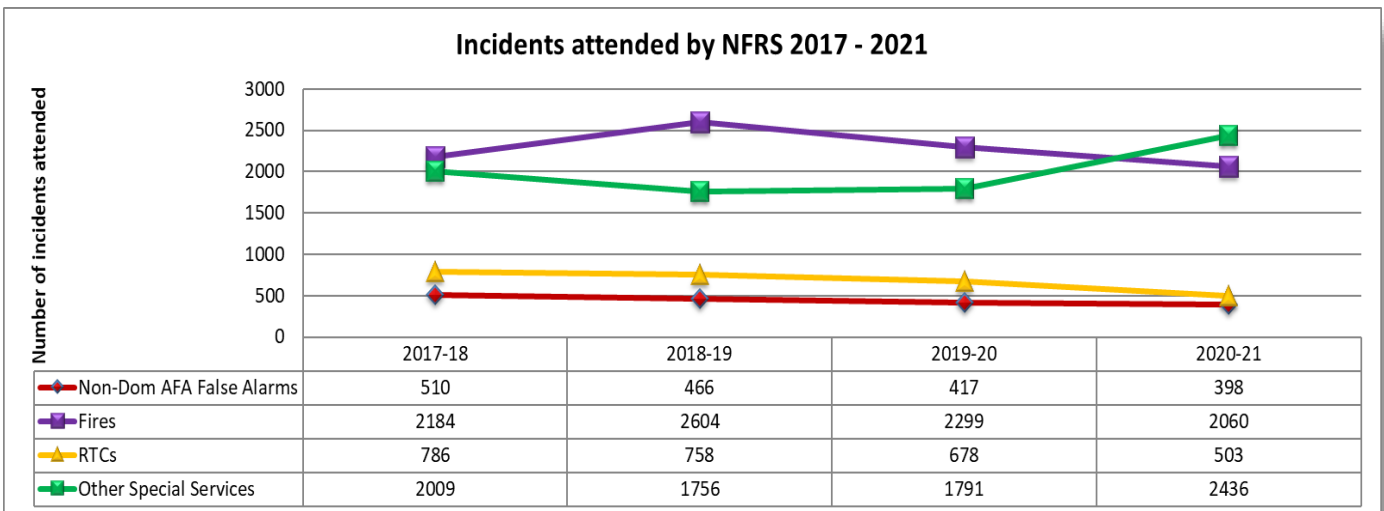
Both these measures were Vital Signs and reported through the corporate reporting system to Norfolk County Council.



Incident Attendance

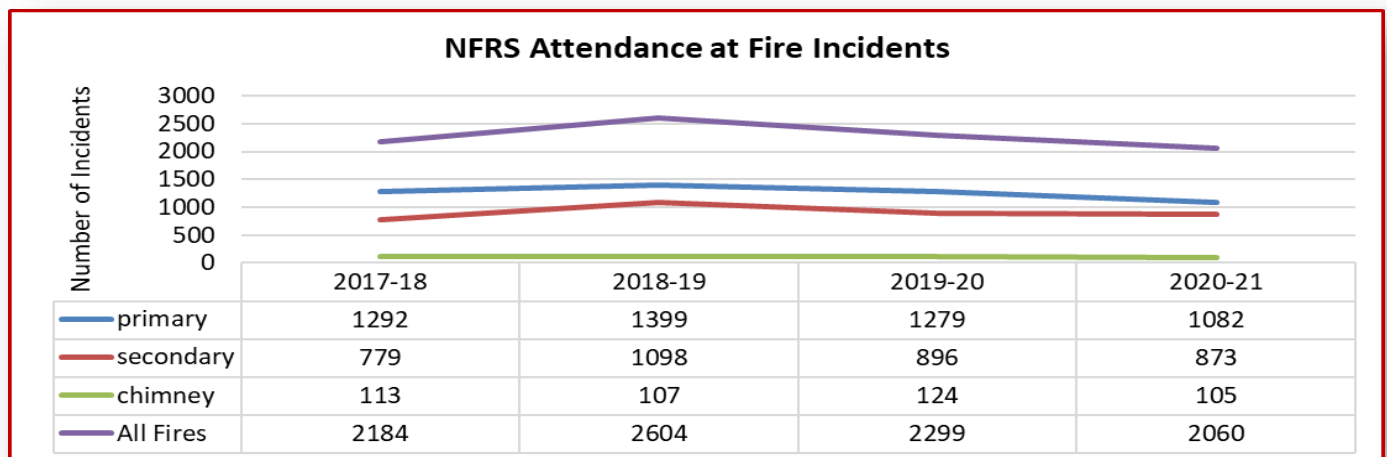
Incident Type	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Attendance to AFA non-domestic False Alarms (BVPI 149i)	510	466	417	398
Attendance to Fires	2184	2604	2299	2060
Attendance to RTC's	786	758	678	503
Attendance to Other Special Services (not RTC's)	2009	1756	1791	2436
Total (Fire, RTC and Other Special Services)	5489	5584	5185	5397
Total attendances of all types	7431	7640	7132	7493
RTC Extractions (number of incidents, not number of people)	216	200	190	132

NOTE the number of non-domestic AFA False Alarms attended now uses data reported to Home Office IRS system.



Incident Type	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Non-domestic AFA False Alarms	510	466	417	398
Fires (All)	2184	2604	2299	2060
Fires (Primary)	1292	1399	1279	1082
Fires (Secondary)	779	1098	896	873
Fires (Chimney)	113	107	124	105
RTC's	786	758	678	503
Other Special Services	2009	1756	1791	2436

These figures may differ from those previously reported due to end of year validation.



PERFORMANCE



Incident Attendance

We attended 2,060 fires – 239 less than last year (a reduction of 10.4%). This included:

- 396 accidental dwelling fires in people's homes – 29 less than last year, resulting in five fatalities and 32 people being injured. This compares to three fatalities and 34 injuries in 2019/20.

Year	Total Accidental dwelling fires	Fire related fatalities	Fire related injuries
2016-2017	397	2	38
2017-2018	430	2	49
2018-2019	427	3	50
2019-2020	425	3	34
2020-2021	396	5	32

- 787 deliberate fires (potentially arson) incidents – an increase of 0.13% compared to 2019/20.

Year	Total Deliberate fires (excluding not known)
2016-2017	663
2017-2018	744
2018-2019	859
2019-2020	788
2020-2021	787

- 168 less accidental non-domestic premises fires (184 in total) – a decrease of 68.29%. However, 6 persons were injured.

Year	Total Accidental fires non-domestic premises	Fire related fatalities	Fire related injuries
2016-2017	230	1	7
2017-2018	239	0	2
2018-2019	190	1	3
2019-2020	246	0	4
2020-2021	78	0	6

We attended a 1.5% increase in non-domestic false automatic fire alarms against a backdrop of increasing false alarms (4.45%).

We attended 503 road traffic collisions which involved the extrication and release of 132 persons from their vehicles. The reduction in our attendance at road traffic collisions can be attributed to a return to the mobilising criteria we used in 2012-13 as well as the effect of Lockdowns due to Covid 19. This brings us in line with other fire and rescue services and focuses our support to the incidents where our specialist skills are most needed.

We attended 2,436 other special service incidents such as flooding, freeing trapped people or animals and calls to assist other agencies (an increase of 36.73% against 2019/20).

ORGANISATIONAL ASSURANCE – COIL



Continuous Organisational Improvement & Learning - COIL

NFRS Landscape...(what we do and how we deliver it)

- NFRS Service Doctrine & Philosophy (CFO Statement)
- NFRS Vision & Mission Statements
- NFRS Service Delivery Plan (feeding District & Station Plans)
- NFRS Plan on a Page
- Community Risk Profile (CRP)
- Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
- Strategic Frameworks (Prevent Protect, Response, People, Logistics & Planning)
- Strategic Intent (5 Year View)
- Assurance Governance Framework

The Journey...(what we want to do better)

- Enable improvements to our service as detailed in the NFRS Service Doctrine & Philosophy (CFO Statement)
- Deliver the Strategic Intent (5 Year View)
- Receive external acknowledgement of improvement and positive change (HMICFRS)

The Vehicle...(how we will monitor, track and drive forwards)

- Continuous Organisational Improvement & Learning



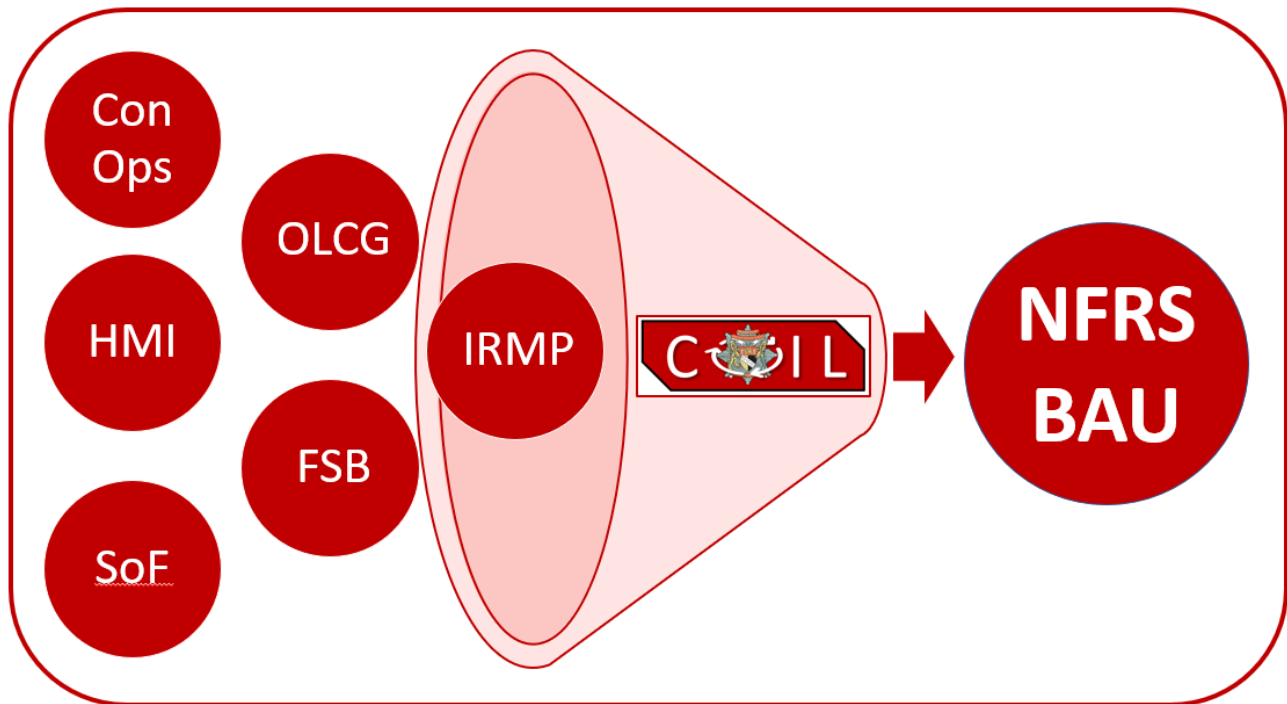
COIL is a **mechanism** to enable improvement. It wraps around our service and draws together all sources of organisational learning and improvement, ensuring that we can **capture, track and review** all strands.

COIL will also allow us to capture the **narrative** around service redesign and change improvement. It will provide a running **record of activities** that have been implemented across our service and the **outcomes** of these. This narrative will allow us to demonstrate how we have improved what we do and how we do it.

COIL is the **roadmap** of NFRS organisational learning and improvement. It will replace the HMICFRS focussed improvement plan, replacing it with a **sector-focussed** roadmap.



Continuous Organisational Improvement & Learning Flow



The Continuous Organisational Improvement and Learning (COIL) mechanism is the process by which different sources of improvement and learning feed into NFRS business as usual (BAU). The sources that feed into the COIL flow includes (but is not limited to): Concept of Operations (ConOps), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services (HMI), State of Fire Report (SoF), Operational Learning and Change Group (OLCG), Fire Standards Board (FSB), Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

Measuring Against and Reporting On

Our mission, values, behaviours and outcomes (plan on a page) sets out NFRS's intent to protect communities and make the county safer. We will do this by improving our relevance, our agility and our capability, becoming better at preventing fires, protecting people, buildings and the environment and responding to fires and other emergencies. COIL will detail activities that demonstrate how we are:

- Reducing instances of fires and increasing **effectiveness** of home, road and water safety
- Providing greater support for vulnerable people through partner **collaboration**
- Improving our **efficiency** by reducing the impact from fire and enforcing fire safety legislation (risk reduction) through engagement with external organisations
- Maximising our **effectiveness** through training, assurance and learning; ensuring operational readiness & firefighter safety, improving the availability & response times of our fire engines and learning from operational incidents.
- Developing, investing and caring for our **people**; engaging and listening to all voices in our service, improving the diversity of our workforce, keeping our staff safe and well and reducing our impact on the environment.

The COIL highlight report will therefore report progress on all activities and how they are improving our:

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- People.



Training and development

We assure the quality of our operations by providing appropriate training and development for all staff and carrying out audits and reviews of working practices to make sure that they are safe, efficient and effective. This includes performance reviews of how well our officers and firefighters manage incidents when they occur with advice and further training provided if required.

To ensure our firefighters maintain their competency in fighting fires we have built a live fire training unit at Scottow Enterprise Park. The unit opened in August 2016 and enables our firefighters to train in live fire conditions.

In the context of the recommendations made in the CFOA Firefit review, together with the changes to the pension scheme meaning that operational staff will be working longer, the Service recognises the importance of effectively managing and promoting firefighter fitness and welfare. Our Physical Training Adviser is working proactively with individuals and stations to embed a culture of fitness and wellbeing.

NFRS offers a range of accredited courses and holds various accredited standards to support T&D delivery, including;

- Level 3 and 4 BTEC technical certificates in Incident Command
- Wholetime new recruits are registered as Apprentices completing internal gateway assessments before passing the accredited End Point Assessment through external accredited assessors
- Driving instructors are accredited through DVSA and must hold suitable qualifications to instruct and assess/qualify.
- Water Rescue course provision is accredited through Rescue 3 – instructors must be accredited to deliver various courses.
- Trauma Care (IEC) is accredited through Trauma Rescue Services – again, instructors must have accreditation that must be maintained through requalification.
- Instructors hold educational awards (levels 3 and 4) in Education and Training (formerly PTLLS)
- Assessors (AVA) and internal quality assurance (IQA) on formal qualifications is undertaken by qualified personnel.

Health and safety and other legislation

NFRS continually seek to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other applicable health and safety legislation. Active health and safety management at all levels in the Service combined with routine performance monitoring and review are at the core of maintaining safe working environments for Service staff and those we assist and support. This is achieved through a combination of operational performance review and periodic pre planned audit of the Service's health and safety management system via regional peer challenge using the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Quality Safety Audit tool kit. This helps the Service to ensure that it has the right equipment.

In 2020/21 there were 10 reportable health and safety absences lasting more than 7 days – 3 less than the previous year

Improvements to accounting, governance and operational assurance

In reviewing our financial, governance and operational arrangements we continue to develop the improvements which will further strengthen our approaches and ensure that we are meeting our statutory obligations to best effect.

ACCOUNTABILITY – EXTERNAL SCRUTINY (HMICFRS)



Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertook a week-long inspection of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) starting 4 February 2019.

This was the first time that HMICFRS had inspected fire and rescue services across England. In carrying out the inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England, HMICFRS look to answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

HMICFRS found that Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is good in the way it responds to fires and other emergencies and good in the way it responds to national risks such as terrorism. The inspectorate also concluded that the service is good at making the service affordable now and in the future and that it is good at getting the right people with the right skills.

Although inspectors found the service is good in how it responds to emergencies, it concluded improvements are required in how the service understands the risk from fire and other emergencies, how it prevents these risks from occurring and how it protects the public through fire safety regulation.

HMICFRS also found that the service is good at ensuring it is affordable, but improvement is required in how it makes the best use of the resources available to it. Inspectors concluded that the service is good at ensuring it gets the right people with the right skills. Improvement is required in how the service promotes its values and culture, ensures fairness and equality, and how it manages performance and develops its leaders.

Based on their findings HMICFRS have provided an overall graded judgement of requires improvement against their 3 main questions of efficiency, effectiveness and people. An improvement action plan has been developed and is used to track initial service progress against the HMICFRS areas of improvement. This has since been replaced with the COIL documents mentioned previously. Oversight arrangements are in place to monitor progress against the HMICFRS actions. Cabinet is reviewing progress regularly and the Cabinet Member has a monthly meeting with the CFO to monitor and review progress.



NFRS is also subject to governance review and scrutiny through the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

Blue light collaboration continues to be a key enabler for NFRS and improving our service to the community. We continue to benefit from well-developed and positive relationships across the blue light services – this is demonstrated through an active programme of collaboration including joint estates, a plan to co-locate our control function with Norfolk Constabulary and helping paramedics to gain access to premises in a medical emergency. In 2018 this relationship was further strengthened by the signing of a formal Memorandum of Understanding between Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and Norfolk Constabulary on emergency services collaboration 2018/19 ([Emergency Services MoU](#)).

Collaboration governance arrangements include the Strategic Oversight Board (chaired jointly by the CFO and NCC), as well as an officer operational group.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS



Accounting

Our [Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-23](#) sets out our plans for the time period. A dedicated Finance Business Manager (FBM) oversees our financial management to ensure that expected income growth and expenditure is correctly identified. The FBM is also a Director of Norfolk Safety (CIC) but does not have any specific responsibility around finances. The CIC uses an external company to audit and file accounts.

Senior Management

Following the permanent appointment of our Chief Fire Officer in 2019, our senior management team structure was established to manage the service. The selection of our Chief Fire Officer and our subsequent senior manager posts follow the requirement of the framework to ensure it is open to competition nationally.

Our [principal officer structure chart](#) can be found on our website.

Strategic Organisational Review

In part as a result of the HMICFRS inspection and report, we previously set out a programme of service improvements (improvement action plan) and a strategic organisational was commenced.

Following the HMICFRS inspection we published an improvement plan. This has now been incorporated into the Continuous Organisational Improvement & Learning (COIL) workstream that wraps around our service and draws on all sources of improvement.

Ongoing Operational Assurance

With an ageing workforce and a number of senior officers due to retire in the coming years, **workforce and succession planning** continues to remain important. We will be looking at our plans for recruitment and retention of retained firefighters with a view to improving the availability of our emergency response resources.

AUTHORISATION



Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority provides assurance to the people of Norfolk that we are satisfied that the Authority's financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements are adequate, operating effectively and meeting statutory requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018 and subsequent updates.

This Statement of Assurance was approved by the Authority at the Cabinet meeting on 2nd August 2021.

Margaret Dewsbury, Cabinet Member
Stuart Ruff, Chief Fire Officer