



**NORTH YORKSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

AMBITION 2025

Ambition 2025

Much has happened since I published my 100 Day report on 1 May 2019, setting out my early findings about North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and my ambition for what we could achieve by 2025.

The Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (the Commissioner) has published her Fire and Rescue Plan, detailing her vision and priorities for us. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has conducted a detailed, independent inspection and provided a report showing what they think we're good at and where we need to improve. The Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 report has been published with many of the recommendations directed toward the London Fire Brigade also being relevant for us.

The Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan sets us a clear mission, strategic vision, priorities and associated objectives. All our efforts must be to deliver against it.

Our mission is "Helping you be safe and feel safe in North Yorkshire". It's our purpose, what we exist for. It applies to anyone who lives in, works in, travels through or visits our city and county.

Our strategic vision is that "North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue will be an exemplary local service".

Our four priorities are:

- Caring for the vulnerable
- Ambitious collaboration
- Realising our potential
- Effective engagement

This Ambition 2025 paper sets out my ideas about how we might best deliver these priorities and apply our learning from the different inspections and assessments that have taken place. It sets a clear direction and includes our opportunities for transformation, the challenges we'll face and how we can overcome them. It assumes a shared desire between the public, partners, politicians and workforce that we exist to deliver the best value for money services to ensure the public and our staff are helped to Be Safe and Feel Safe.

But the ideas in here aren't set in stone, they're a starter for ten, and open to debate, challenge and change. They also demonstrate the scale of change we need to embark upon. The report deliberately doesn't detail how the ideas might be developed, designed and implemented; our workforce, representative bodies and public must all be involved in this and must be consulted with about final propositions.

It should be clear that the transformation ideas set out in this paper deliver the Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan and address the 'requires improvement' areas identified by HMICFRS.

1. What's our ambition? What will we look and feel like in 2025?

Fast forward to 2025. We're a flexible, agile, effective and financially stable service delivering value for money to the public we exist to serve. We deliver the vision and priorities in the Fire & Rescue Plan, through a Risk & Resource Model that's based on risk, demand, availability and affordability. We help everyone in York and North Yorkshire Be Safe and Feel Safe.

The public know what to expect from us and we can demonstrate the causal effect of our work on their performance, on their safety. We currently adopt public performance as our own, for example the number of fires or rescues and the associated deaths and injuries. While our work influences those figures, other external factors also feature, and we can't differentiate between them. In future we'll be able to show the direct effect of our work and interventions on public performance, the demand they create. We will have stated aims for service delivery, about how we'll prevent, protect, respond and create community resilience. For example, we might set out an intent to direct and tailor resource to the most vulnerable in society, how we'll do it and how it will be measured. We'll then evaluate that work and be able to say the direct effect it had on public performance.

Our resources are matched to risk, demand, availability of staff and affordability. Our vehicles, equipment, Personal Protective Equipment and training are modern and suitable. We care about our impact on the environment and are committed to minimising it, working towards being a truly 'green' service. We have financial stability and sustainability and are beginning to invest in modernising our buildings.

We keep people and places safe by integrating and balancing the use of Prevention, Protection, Response and Community Resilience activities, both in our communities and in our own workplaces.

Our staff are fulfilled. They are held accountable but are empowered to make decisions, be creative and make the most of partnership working. They know what they come to work to do and they're properly paid and contracted to do it. We operate as a single team, everyone knowing their contribution to the safety of people and places, regardless of their role in the organisation. Our approach is fully inclusive, we're seen as an attractive organisation for everyone, regardless of characteristics. Especially talented people are identified for their ability and developed for future roles, everyone is continuously developed in their existing roles.

We work strongly in collaboration and partnership to deliver our services in the best interests of the public we exist to serve. Enable is fully embedded, providing an appropriate level of service, in a timely manner, to our frontline teams. Multi-agency

teams are colocated in single buildings to share ideas and work together. This will better join up public service delivery, reduce the overall public estate and free up funding for frontline services.

2. What opportunities do we need to pursue to reach the ambition?

The transformation programme is designed around three categories of opportunity, each one with numerous interdependent projects:

- Opp1. On-call availability
- Opp2. Maximising service delivery capacity
- Opp3. Saving to invest to modernise

Opp 1: On-call availability

This is the number one opportunity. It enables lots of the other opportunities and helps us achieve a sustainable, consistent financial footing to fund them. Response is arguably the part of our service delivery the public value most, though we know it's one tool of four that make the maximum difference when properly integrated.

There's no single measure to fix the current system for on-call availability. And it needs to be fixed, too often on-call fire engines are not available. The current system is fundamentally broken, it makes no sense to keep thinking we can make it work effectively. Society is changing and people and employers are less likely to support the On-call service. We lose too many new firefighters in the early stages of their careers.

A complete rebuild of the system of pay, contracts, flexibility and support is possible. Ideally this would be within the current Terms and Conditions, but that might not be possible. Revised contracts could only be achieved through a negotiated agreement, but even if that isn't necessary, we'll work and consult closely with staff and representative bodies. We'll seek to retain as many existing staff as possible while attracting new joiners who might not have previously considered being an On-call firefighter.

There are six motivators for becoming and remaining an On-call firefighter. Each one applies to every firefighter; their importance varying between individuals and throughout their careers, moving up and down like a graphic equaliser. The motivators are all met through responding to incidents. They are:

1. Pay
2. Community Service
3. Being part of a team
4. Excitement of response
5. Pride of wearing the NYFRS badge and saying "I'm a firefighter"
6. CV building

None of these are met if fire engines are not available. And we need to change the conversation with firefighters when their fire engine isn't available. We need to reach

a position where there's a reasonable expectation that a fire engine should be available and when it isn't then it isn't the fault of our service or our staff, it's because not enough people are coming forward to be firefighters.

Some people think an incentive of being an On-call firefighter should be the opportunity to move into a wholetime firefighter post. But each time we 'migrate' an on-call firefighter to the wholetime we exclude anyone who can't be an On-call firefighter from being wholetime; this isn't fair because it relies on living near an On-call station and having a lifestyle that enables someone to drop everything and respond to the station. This is perhaps not possible for people with caring responsibilities for whom regular shift work might be ideal, or indeed for someone whose employer won't release them. The way to incentivise being On-call isn't the promise of a wholetime job, it's about properly rewarding the role of On-call firefighter.

Several measures are necessary to transform the On-call system, each on their own won't be enough. This diagram shows some of the ideas that will be explored through a major project. There are bound to be other ideas as well.



Pay

We need to implement a pay scheme that properly rewards both the commitment to the pager and the response demand at different stations. The current system is

wildly variable due to an overdependence on operational demand, not recognising the commitment to the 'pager' by firefighters at quieter stations and too little of it can be offered as guaranteed household income for bank borrowing. It also needs to recognise the different aspects of maintaining individual competence, and personal and station administration and compliance. So, areas such as these need to be rewarded:

- competence
- strength and fitness
- appliances and equipment
- personal administration

Salaries should be high enough to attract and retain On-call firefighters while maximising the size of the workforce within budget. Cost modelling and scenario planning is needed to calculate what's affordable, reasonable and compliant with regulations.

Different types of fire engine and crew sizes

Most of our fire engines are 'B' Type, the traditional image and size of vehicle. To be available they need a minimum crew of four firefighters, including a driver and incident commander, and carry a maximum of six.

It's increasingly difficult to maintain the availability of these engines. We have some smaller fire engines called Tactical Response Vehicles which are available with crews of three to five and other Land Rover based engines that crew with two or three. The Tactical Response Vehicles had a difficult introduction to the service with the original plan to place them on Wholetime fire stations, located where risk and demand are highest. This history taints our ability to introduce them at On-call stations.

Some other services have successfully introduced different vehicles with smaller crews, often carrying two to four firefighters. 'B' Type fire engines have equipment designed for smaller crews but still suitable when four are available. When four or more firefighters are available, they can mobilise to the full range of incidents and tackle the same incidents as those on a 'B' Type. They can commit to a building fire or deal with a road traffic collision with the most modern eDraulic equipment. There's evidence of On-call crews in other services requesting smaller vehicles because they recognise the benefits to availability and that their motivators are hit more often.

There may be an opportunity to match resource to local risk, demand and availability, but it would need an evidence base and full consideration and consultation.

Full-time multi-agency officers

Many Lifeboat stations have the benefit of a full-time member of staff to support the administration of the base and to manage and lead the team. It's not necessary or

affordable to have a full-time firefighter dedicated to fire service work at our On-call stations, and we already have a team leader in the shape of the Watch Manager. But a member of staff shared with other organisations is possible, as demonstrated through the tri-service officer role in Cornwall.

We will soon start a trial, based on the Cornwall model. A multi-agency officer in North Yorkshire will provide resilience to blue-light services response. They'll undertake elements of the On-Call firefighter's role, helping to maintain fire engine availability. They'll have Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) powers from the Chief Constable so they can contribute to maintaining and improving community safety and they could also be trained as Ambulance Emergency First Responders.

Their primary role will be to support the community safety prevention agenda. They will supplement the prevention work of our own Community Safety Officers, enabling them to target their work in the most vulnerable areas, including those that are most remote and rural. And they can be eyes and ears on the ground to advise Business Safety officers of concerns. Their salary is funded equally by the partner organisations and we'll seek to collaborate with the widest public sector, including health and local authorities.

Employer and community engagement and recognition

District and station management teams would be encouraged to engage closely with local employers, encouraging them to release staff and providing feedback about their contribution to public safety. As a service we'll recognise employers and award those who support us by releasing their staff. We'll investigate whether there are any financial benefits that can be gained for them through the tax system and lobby government to consider such a scheme. Employers could have plaques/certificates to display.

We can engage with ward groups, parish and town councils, schools and other local bodies to support recruitment and to share the performance of our crews. For example, some potential firefighters might be discouraged by their need to collect children from school or other caring commitments. We could explore opportunities with schools, guaranteeing to return a firefighter by an agreed time should the school commit to caring for the child beyond the end of the normal school day. Clearly lots of work would be needed to determine how this might work in practice, it's just an example of the type of creative thinking we can all apply.

Fire stations as Business hubs

Increasingly people work from home and this is likely to expand further as broadband speeds improve. We could create business hubs on fire stations, offering comfortable, heated facilities for home/agile workers who commit to being On-call firefighters and respond from their 'workplace'.

Ideas such as this are perhaps the most aspirational, but we need to be creative if we're to be the best we can be. Raising the idea in this paper doesn't mean it's going

to happen, but the possibility of it on some stations might be worthy of consideration. Various hurdles would need to be overcome including increased utility costs, insurance costs and any capital investment needed.

Flexible contracts and self-management of availability

Our firefighters currently work to national 'grey book' terms and conditions, however the pay and inflexibility makes it difficult to recruit and retain firefighters.

Firefighters shouldn't be asked to provide excessive cover. They should be able to manage their own stations availability and to work together to fairly maintain availability.

Modern ICT systems should allow firefighters to change their availability on their mobile phones or tablets, they shouldn't need to access PCs or visit the station. Free off the shelf applications such as WhatsApp already exist for crews to communicate their availability between themselves. Modern pager technology could provide instant confirmation to the control room that the expected crew is responding, allowing them to send further resources as necessary.

Opp 2: Maximising capacity and value for money in service delivery

What is this idea about?

We are introducing Intent Based Leadership to our service. In a nutshell, this involves setting an intent, the 'thing' we want to achieve, and then letting front line, supervisory and management staff get on and achieve it in their own way.

Maximising capacity and value for money is about delivering the best possible service for the public by balancing use of the Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience tools. It provides greater autonomy, variety and success for fire crews.

What is the purpose of the Service Delivery function?

The Service Delivery Directorate plans, prepares and delivers our front-line functions to the public and partner agencies. It's what we exist to do.

The front line includes prevention, protection, response (including fire control) and community resilience.

Why should we build capacity?

We have moral and statutory duties to deliver the best services possible for residents, business owners and visitors to North Yorkshire and City of York. We know how well Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services think we do it.

We have specialist teams in Prevention and Protection, but there are relatively few when compared to our wholetime station-based staff. This limits the amount of work

we can do in those areas but allows us to maintain a good level of response in terms of appliances and crew members.

How will we build capacity?

We will enable and encourage wholetime station-based staff to contribute more to prevention and protection, and forge closer links with the specialist teams. This will improve the balance of our commitment toward Prevention, Protection and Response. We'll also step up our efforts in Community Resilience to help people help themselves, reduce reliance on emergency services and help them prepare for emergencies when they happen.

What will feel different?

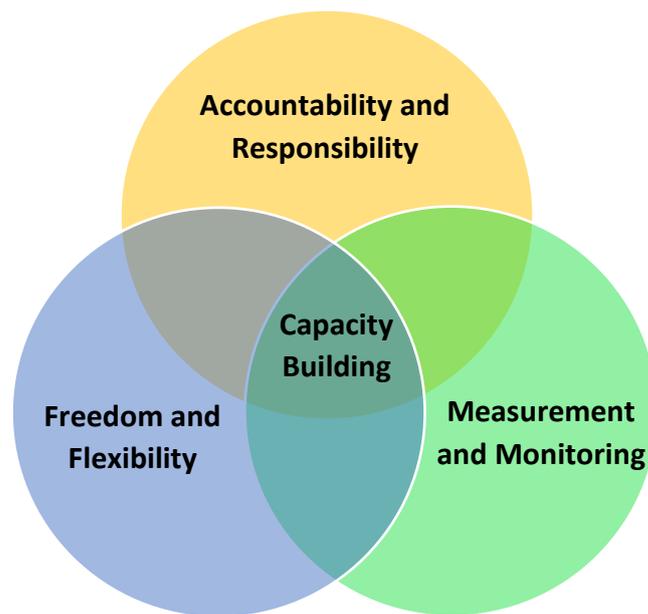
This question gets to the nub of how these changes will be delivered and what all service delivery staff will do to make it work.

District and station management teams will be held accountable and responsible for the safety of people and places in their 'patch'. In return they will receive freedom and flexibility in how they balance use of the four service delivery tools available to them - Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience - through the three enabling tools of Partnership, Planning and Performance Monitoring. The four service delivery tools are equally important and are all statutory duties.

Targets will not be set centrally; they'll be agreed by District Management Teams and can be flexible if unforeseen demands or changes occur during the year.

Centrally we will measure and monitor outputs and outcomes. This will identify causal links between our activity and changes in public performance and risk (risk = likelihood and severity of harm caused). It's not always easy to identify these links however and they are often affected by factors outside our control. Knowing what works and what doesn't will help teams to adapt their approach to helping people Be Safe and Feel Safe.

So, the approach is based on three key principles: Accountability and Responsibility; Freedom and Flexibility; Measurement and Monitoring;



Providing only one or two of these is not enough to make the approach work. For example, if managers are held accountable and responsible for the safety of their area but not given the freedom and flexibility to do what they feel best to meet local needs, they will defend any poor performance by saying they're just doing as they're told. Similarly, if we don't measure and monitor the output and outcomes, District Management Teams won't be able to demonstrate success or redirect resource to where they know it has greatest effect.

What are the tools all about and isn't it what we do now?

There is nothing new in the approach set out in this document. We use all the tools listed below now, but sometimes in an inconsistent, uncoordinated and less deliberate manner than we could. By using them more systematically and deliberately we will build capacity, deliver more for the same cost and help people Be Safe and Feel Safe.

The intent will be agreed through consultation, but we might expect it to be about making communities as safe as possible and working in collaboration with others. The tools are the parameters within which we'll operate. They are the four service delivery tools mentioned above – Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience and the three enabling tools – Planning, Partnership and Performance Monitoring.

What will we achieve?

We will increase capacity within Service Delivery across the seven tools. We will improve the safety of our people and places, by offering freedom and flexibility to station-based staff to determine how best to tackle risk in their area.

Responsibility and accountability will be held at the appropriate level. Staff can feel empowered to be creative and find new ways to work. We must concentrate our efforts on our statutory duties, but by tackling vulnerability from fire we will tackle other forms of vulnerability, and vice versa. For example, by helping people to be healthy – nourished, hydrated, warm and socially engaged – we reduce the likelihood of dangerous lifestyles that can lead to fire. So, anything that enables people to lead healthy, safe and secure lives also leads to a reduced likelihood of suffering a fire and being killed or injured by it.

Station based staff can target the specific need in their area. It is appropriate for Scarborough for example to direct resource toward suicide prevention and mental wellbeing, and safety in Houses of Multiple Occupation. Similarly, it is appropriate that York do the same for water safety, student accommodation and heritage buildings. Data will be available about the type of person most at risk in an area. The approach will make it personally beneficial to our staff to collect equality data at every opportunity; it will allow them to demonstrate how well they target local needs.

*What is this **not** about?*

This is **not** about reducing the quality and capability of our response, one of the essential tools we use to keep people and places safe. Excellent response requires firefighters to be fit, fast and strong, to know their equipment and appliances inside out and be able to use them. It needs excellent knowledge of risk sites and the difficulties they present when we respond to them. Responders need to judge risk, weigh up options and make good decisions. These skills are maintained through education, training, practice and ongoing development.

This is **not** about asking firefighters to work outside their role map. Work underway nationally will determine whether the role expands into other areas. Firefighters can rightly expect to come to work and make a positive difference in the community they serve. This will be best achieved by balancing their activity across the seven tools, offering variety and the ability to self-start.

This is **not** about reducing the size of prevention, protection and enabling teams within Service Delivery. The work carried out by these teams is essential in helping people to Be Safe and Feel Safe. The ability to focus on a single tool, prevention or protection, leads to a deep expertise than cannot be achieved by those with more diverse roles.

How will we measure and monitor performance?

It's essential to measure and monitor performance so we can redirect our resources and effort based on learning about how well different approaches work. We also need to assure the public, the Commissioner, the Inspectorate and ourselves that we are doing the best job possible.

Exactly what we measure across the service will be developed by the new Area Manager, Head of Assurance. But stations and districts will also be able to collect

local data to evidence for themselves how to target their efforts, that's the freedom and flexibility bit in action.

How will people be developed to take on this way of working?

In time every member of station-based staff will receive development. It will build the skills, knowledge and confidence that staff need to think differently and collaboratively, and to plan, deliver and measure interventions to meet local risk and demand.

Continuous support will be available for station-based staff with a new model for inter-departmental relationships. As well as delivering specific prevention and protection related work, these specialist staff will be available to support station staff in delivering activities and to provide extra personal development as necessary.

Development will be an ongoing process, not a one-off. District and station management teams will identify gaps in the skills, knowledge and confidence of their staff as they develop their approach to help people Be Safe and Feel Safe. These gaps will be filled by ongoing annual development, largely delivered within Service Delivery unless specific needs are identified that can't be.

Opp 3: Saving to Invest to Modernise

How's our budget looking?

We spend more than we gather in income, using reserves each year to make up the difference. We're a £35m business with a £34m income. The reserves are limited so we hope to balance the budget one year earlier than planned originally, but that will still not free up modernisation funds.

We need to extend our savings to free up funds to invest in vehicles, equipment, Personal Protective Equipment, buildings and training.

We keep our fire engines and much of their equipment for up to 18 years and our special appliances for even longer. Over that time there are huge leaps in technology to improve the safety, handling and environmental impact. Also, fire engines have little monetary value at 18 years. Ideally, we'll reduce the lifespan of our fleet to better keep up with developments and have a valuable asset to sell when we replace it. 'B' Type fire engines cost about £300k and remain an essential part of our fleet. But we can also provide other fire engines for lower cost with suitable capability for local risk and demand. They might also be able to be multi-purpose or have specific capabilities to deal with specific risks in different places.

Our special appliances are often kept for over 20 years. For example, our Incident Command Unit is 23 years old and the technology is outdated. Modernisation funds would allow us to replace these aging vehicles and improve service delivery.

The equipment provided on our new fire engines is excellent, but the older fire engines have equipment that isn't technically advanced. New fire engines have battery powered eDraulic rescue kit, older ones still have hydraulic. The hydraulic kit still does a job, but it takes longer to set up, is noisy, more cumbersome and carries the risk of high-pressure puncture injury. We haven't introduced telemetry for Breathing Apparatus entry control; it could improve the safe system of work and reduce the risk of human error.

We provide excellent firekit and will soon enter a new contract to improve it further. But the kit is designed for structural firefighting and is heavy and less dexterous. We could provide different Personal Protective Equipment for different tasks; rescue jackets for road traffic collisions and lightweight kit for moor and fell fires.

Too much of our estate is dilapidated. Buildings are crumbling, uncomfortable and uninspiring. They are not welcoming for public use and facilities are inappropriate for a diverse workforce or visitors. Stations such as Northallerton, Scarborough and Richmond are not fit for purpose or appropriate to share with other organisations. It would be good to replace or refurbish many of these stations, sharing them at every opportunity with other organisations to reduce costs and to reduce the overall public sector estate and associated maintenance, bills and carbon footprint.

3. What barriers will we face in reaching the ambition?

None of the opportunities are straightforward to achieve. We have three categories of barrier to overcome:

- Bar1. Funding
- Bar2. Capacity
- Bar3. Resistance to change

Barrier 1: Funding. How will we pay for the change?

Opportunities 1 and 3 both incur costs. Opportunity 2 can be achieved within current budget; it's about changing our approach and culture rather than spending on revenue or capital. Many of the opportunities are interdependent, they can't be achieved or funded without making other changes. This complexity will not be simple to manage and lots of data analysis, cost modelling and scenario planning will be needed.

Funding a new On-call pay scheme:

Our On-call availability is below 100%, at some stations it's as low as 40%. This means we can't provide the service levels the public reasonably expect. A different pay mechanism is likely to cost more per person than currently.

If On-call stations were 100% available, and if we managed to introduce multi-agency officers on every station to help with management and administration, we could possibly reduce the need for the Operational Staffing Reserve and District

Based Crew and Watch Managers. Those costs could be redirected to fund the new payment scheme for On-call firefighters and our share of the costs for Multi-agency officers. There may be a transitional period during which additional funds would be needed and this will need to be explored fully.

We don't want to lose the On-call firefighters we have. They're professional, well trained and capable. But we do want to better balance their availability and to attract new firefighters to help us do that. If we're to pay and contract people properly to retain and attract firefighters, we need to carefully consider how many we need; it's no use having 10 available at night and only 3 during the day and at weekends. Changing the fire engine model to have a variety that can be crewed with different numbers of firefighters is one way to achieve this. At stations with smaller vehicles, we can employ fewer firefighters to maintain the availability, accepting there are some limits to the work they can do with fewer people. But we would never place a fire engine in a location if it wasn't suitable to manage local risk and demand or have a global fleet across York and North Yorkshire that couldn't manage large scale incidents or spate conditions.

Barrier 2: Capacity. Who will deliver the change?

Numbers of people are not the problem; we have over 700 staff. The capacity problem is having enough people with the right skills to deliver such a transformation programme, and their willingness to take on the tasks if they sit outside their job profile.

The transformation ideas set out in this report are all about delivering the best value and best quality services that we can to the public. We need to make the change as an organisation, it can't be led or dictated by only a few people. So, people will need to step up and accept responsibility for leading or delivering the projects that will make up the programme. This won't be about asking people to do tasks that are way above their pay grade or responsibilities, but it will be about asking people to do tasks that traditionally they haven't. The reward of being a vital part of improving our service and the personal development it will provide in building skills, knowledge and experience should suffice.

Barrier 3: Resistance to Change. Will people react badly to change and resist it?

There are myriad examples of change being rejected or battled, we face it now with the reintroduction of Tactical Response Vehicles. As humans we often fear change, or perhaps we fear the uncertainty that planned change brings. Sometimes when it's implemented and embedded, people forget their concerns and it quickly becomes the sensible norm. Other times the change goes wrong, and those who challenged it are proven to have been correct. But this mustn't be about points scoring, that's why true engagement with staff and Representative Bodies is so important. Finally, when change does bring negative results, we must be willing to reverse or adapt it.

Experience shows that resistance to change can be avoided or minimised by engaging and involving those affected by it in the delivery; it reduces mistakes and identifies the pitfalls. But we must avoid superficial engagement and avoid saying, “well you were involved” if it doesn’t work; that’s not a helpful approach. Engagement and involvement fit perfectly with the model of Intent Based Leadership and I hope done well we can avoid the errors of the past. The intent of what we want to achieve can be set; it would be difficult to argue against the ‘intent’ of dramatically improving On-call availability. How it’s achieved can be down to those who work it and are most affected by it.

We must also be willing to trial different options to provide evidence for substantive change. This will allow us much more to make evidence-based decisions that are more likely to be accepted. But people have emotional responses to change that needs to be carefully managed, balancing the business needs of our service with the human needs of our colleagues and communities.

There may be legal resistance to proposed change. We must comply with rules and regulations. Some fire and rescue services currently face legal challenge on duty systems they’ve introduced, sometimes having to reverse their decisions and find new ways to deliver efficiencies.

4. How do these ideas meet the priorities in the FRS Plan?

Let’s remind ourselves of the priorities and take each one in turn:

Caring for the vulnerable

Improving On-call availability will help us respond as quickly as possible when we’re needed. Vulnerable people are most likely to need us, so this will help protect them.

A core principle of the Maximising Capacity and Value for Money approach is tailoring and targeting our work based on vulnerability. The partnerships we can create to help identify people in need, and well targeted prevention, protection and community resilience work will help them Be and Feel Safe. This is not only for those in urban areas; creating resilience in the On-call service through multi-agency officers will allow specialist prevention and protection staff to focus effort on those in the most rural communities as well.

Ambitious collaboration

The programme depends on collaboration, internally and externally.

Enable will create capacity and resilience in our enabling services teams, at the same time freeing up funds to invest in modernisation and front-line services. It will help us provide service delivery teams with better data and information to direct and evaluate their effort.

Sharing buildings with partners will save money and encourage closer and more effective partnership working.

Partnership and collaboration are central to the Maximising Capacity and Value for Money approach; it can become the standard way of working with silo 'fire and rescue only' approaches becoming unusual.

Realising our potential

All the opportunities set out in this paper will help us to be the best we can be. It is not only about front-line service delivery. Enabling Services do what it says on the tin...enable. They'll enable what we need in technology, equipment, vehicles and buildings, HR policies and approaches, sound financial management, communications, administration and other functions.

We'll be more inclusive, with people able to influence and deliver regardless of position, empowered to do what's needed to keep themselves, their colleagues and their communities safe.

Effective engagement

Nothing in this paper is agreed, it's all just the start of a conversation. That conversation will involve staff, partners, politicians, businesses, faith and diversity groups and, arguably most important of all, every member of the community. We'll use professional judgment and evidence to create ideas and options, but they won't be introduced without first engaging with those affected.

5. What do I hope you've learned in this paper?

I hope you've learned that change is necessary if we're to develop and improve as a fire and rescue service. We provide good services, but they could be better. We don't have a balanced budget; we must balance it and go further to free funds to invest in modernisation. We have good people in the service; we need to better develop them and invest in them – they're the only thing that gets anything done, and the only thing that stops it. We need to empower people by setting 'intent' and then trusting them to achieve it in the most efficient and effective way possible.

The ideas in this report have been developed through experience and enormous thought and reflection. I believe they'd help us be even better than we already are and are massively directed at serving the public as best we can, while not ignoring our own needs as employees. But they're not set in stone, they really are just ideas, a starter for ten. Every colleague has equally valid ideas and it's our collective creative capacity that will help us achieve excellence. It's a journey to be taken together, not one to be dictated by me as the Chief Fire Officer.

Thanks for reading this paper, it means a lot. The ideas are ambitious, but if we aim for an 'A' and fall short, we might still get a 'B'. If we aim to just pass and fall short, we'll fail. So, let's get together and make it happen, it'll be better for us and the communities we exist to serve. And who knows, we might get an A*.

