Our Safety Plan
Community Risk Management Plan

2020-2024

www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing · protecting · responding

Our Safety Plan

Community Risk Management Plan

2020-2024

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter please **contact us.**

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeżeli potrzebna jest pomoc tłumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

French

Si vous souhaitez obtenir ce document dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format ou si vous avez besoin des services d'un interprète, veuillez nous contacter.

Urdu

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجیے۔

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Arabic

إذا أردت هذه الوثيقة بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، أو إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات مترجم، فنرجو أن تقوم بالاتصال بنا.

Chinese

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Farsi

اگر این مدرک را به زبانی دیگر یا در فورمتی دیگر میخواهید و یا اگر احتیاج به سرویس مترجم دارید، لطفا با ما تماس بگیرید

0300 330 1000

Contents

Our Safety Plan 2020-2024 was developed in 2020 and sets out our priorities for protecting Staffordshire over that four-year period. This update to the plan is to ensure that the priorities we set back in 2020 are still relevant and meeting the needs of our communities. We are also checking that they are fit for purpose for the environment in which we now operate.

Updating our plan gives us the opportunity to assess our progress against a number of key pieces of work such as our response to the latest HMICFRS inspection report 2021/22. We have developed a tracker system to maintain oversight of our progress against the Areas of Improvement identified within that report and these priority areas are monitored regularly and scrutinised via our governance arrangements.

We are also adopting all of the new fire standards produced by the Fire Standards Board, which was in its infancy at the time of drafting the current safety plan, but has now developed considerably and published 16 standards. It is important to ensure that our policies, procedures and practices are aligned to the nationally developed standards demonstrating our commitment to deliver a professional, competent and trusted service.

In addition, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), the Local Government Association (LGA), and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) have developed a National Core Code of Ethics for the fire sector, which was published in May 2021. We have adopted this code in its entirety. These ethical principles have now replaced our previous values and behavioural framework, and are now the foundation of the behaviours expected of all our staff and are a fundamental part of all appraisals and recruitment and promotion processes.

Our Service transformation work continues to deliver efficiencies across all areas of the Service. We have continued to work hard to transform the way in which we deliver our services and how we operate to ensure we continue to deliver a highly efficient and effective response to fires and other emergencies. This transformation will need to continue as public sector finances are set to carry on reducing over the lifetime of this Safety Plan.

As we seek to be as efficient as possible, we also recognise the need to invest in proactive activities that help prevent fires and other emergencies happening in the first place. We truly believe that preventing incidents occurring is the best way to protect our communities, however, we cannot be complacent as operational demand on the fire and rescue service has started to rise, both locally and nationally.

We have witnessed locally the impacts of climate change upon our communities, with both flooding and wildfire incidents occurring on a more frequent basis. Therefore, our response capability needs to be robust and readily available, in order to be prepared to mobilise when required and support larger scale operations as part of our commitments to national resilience.

The demands upon our protection team has increased significantly in recent years. Following the outcome and recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase one report, a number of changes to legislation, has meant that we have had to review and reshape our Protection teams and the work that they undertake. This increased demand on the Service is being supported nationally through grant funding and we are working closely with our regional partners to ensure that the appropriate resources are in place.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires each fire and rescue service to produce a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which sets out how they intend to keep people safe and meet statutory obligations. We currently call this our Safety Plan, but in line with NFCC guidance, moving forward we will refer to our new plan as our CRMP. Therefore, in this report we refer to both this current Safety Plan 2020-24 and the proposed new CRMP.

Our governance arrangements under the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) continue to ensure that the Chief Fire Officer is held to account for delivery of the priorities within both the Safety Plan/CRMP, and the PFCC's Fire and Rescue Plan. The publication date of the next CRMP will be aligned to the election timetable for the PFCC as currently they do not align. Therefore, this current Safety Plan will run to the end of December 2024 and the next CRMP will cover the period 2025 to 2028.

In order to manage all of these competing demands we need to ensure that we have a well-developed workforce plan, that predicts what human resources will be required over the short, medium, and long term, in order to provide assurances that all of our priorities can be delivered. We will invest in our people as they are our most valuable assets and we need to provide them with the necessary resources and skills to enable them to deliver our services to the highest standards, whilst making sure we are looking after them and maintaining their wellbeing.

The issues we will face in the years ahead further reinforces the need to work together with our communities, our staff, key stakeholders and many other partners to continue delivering an excellent service in what are likely to be the most challenging times we have faced.

Rob Barber
Chief Fire Officer

Why we are extending the term of this **Safety Plan**

The PFCC has the responsibility for approving the Service's CRMP. The current Safety Plan 2020-2024 was approved by the Commissioner in 2020. This plan outlines the Service's strategic vision, priorities, objectives, and strategies to enhance and respond effectively to the needs of our communities across Staffordshire.

Legally the Service must have a new CRMP in place when the previous plan ends, so we have already started to develop our next CRMP. We would normally expect to develop the next CRMP for launch on 1st April 2024 in line with our financial, planning and performance cycles to cover the next four year period, i.e. 2024-2028.

The elections for the office of the Staffordshire Commissioner are due to take place in May 2024.

The office of the Commissioner is required to produce its own Fire and Rescue Service Plan and approve the Service's CRMP and as such, the new Commissioner will need some time to develop and deliver its own plan and understand how the Service's plan and priorities support this.

The Strategic Governance Board has agreed that the term of this current Safety Plan 2020-2024 be extended until the end of 2024 to allow time for the new Commissioner to take office and fully understand the planning process and plan contents and to ensure that the governance arrangements for the Commissioner's office, police and fire are more closely aligned.

In light of the decision to extend the life of this Safety Plan to the end of 2024 we have undertaken a review of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks across Staffordshire to ensure there are no significant changes or areas of concern on which the Service would need to consult with its workforce or its communities.

We have set out these risks in more detail within this updated plan, together with a summary of any emerging risks we may face now or in the future. We have also updated this plan where necessary to inform our communities about our plans to address these risks and respond to emergencies and deliver our prevention and protection activities efficiently and effectively.

What we do

Every day we make sure that what we do makes a difference to our communities. Whether it is responding to emergencies or educating communities, we know that what guides us is our vision and principles for a safer Staffordshire.

When a crisis or emergency happens, you know when you dial 999 we will respond.

This Safety Plan (also known as our Community Risk Management Plan) outlines the priorities for the Service and the approach we will take to ensure we do not compromise on our commitment to protecting our local communities, reducing risk and maintaining firefighter safety.

Your **Service**

"**Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service keeps people and places safe by using a range of Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience resources and activities, in our homes, workplaces and in our communities**".

We have 33 Community Fire Stations across the county. Our headquarters and Learning and Development Centre are based at Stone, and our combined Fire & Police Transport & Engineering site (JETS) is based at Trentham Lakes in Stoke-on-Trent.

We have around 600 firefighters who keep our communities safe, with 366 of these, being On-call and the Service has over 200 support staff providing various functions including business support, risk planning, performance and assurance and ICT.

Our fire stations comprise eight whole-time stations, two day-duty and 23 on-call stations, with a number of on-call watches based at the whole-time and day-duty stations. This combination provides 39 front-line appliances and a variety of special appliances, which support both local and national resilience.

Staffordshire

Longnor

Biddulph

Kidsgrove

Leek

Animal Rescue (Leek)

Sandyford

Burslem

Ipstones

Hanley

Water Rescue Unit (Newcastle)

Newcastle-under-Lyme

Longton

Cheadle

Enhanced Rescue Pump (Longton)

Aerial Ladder Platform (Longton)

Detection Identification & Monitoring (Longton)

Loggerheads

Stone

Uttoxeter

Enhanced Rescue Pump (Stafford)

Rope Rescue (Stafford)

Tutbury

Eccleshall

Stafford

Abbots Bromley

Burton

Gnosall

Rising Brook

High-Volume Pump (Rugeley)

Aerial Ladder Platform (Burton)

Rugeley

Barton under Needwood

Penkridge

Cannock

Chase Terrace

Lichfield

Brewood

Animal Rescue (Cannock)

Tamworth Mercia

Bilbrook and Codsall

Tamworth

Water Rescue Unit (Tamworth)

Wombourne

Kinver

🟨 Northern Service Delivery Group		🔵 Wholetime Stations
🟧 Eastern Service Delivery Group		🟢 Day Crewed Stations
🟥 Western Service Delivery Group		⚫ On-call Stations

1 Our People

Our people are extremely important to us and our aim is to have a diverse, flexible, skilled and supported workforce. We continue to work hard as a service to embed a positive culture, identify, and address the challenges faced by the Service through our Workforce Planning Board.

2 Our Core Code of Ethics

We have adopted the national Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services in England. The code of ethics has been developed in partnership with the NFCC, Local Government Association (LGA), and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners to support a consistent approach to ethics, including behaviours, by fire and rescue services in England.

The Core Code sits alongside the Code of Ethics Fire Standard developed by the Fire Standards Board and sets out five ethical principles.

Putting our communities first:

We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity:

We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect:

Making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership:

We are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI):

We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI within both the Service and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

For each of the values we have a Principal Officer Champion. Each Champion has written a personal statement about what that value means to them and their commitment to it. These ethical principles should be considered within all our activities, policies, procedures and plans.

We believe the Core Code of Ethics will help us serve our communities and make our Service an even better place to work. It will help everyone to display and promote good behaviours. We expect everyone in our Service to respect and follow the Core Code. This includes those working with, or on behalf of, the Service.

In March 2023, HMICFRS published its spotlight report on 'Values and Cultures in Fire and Rescue Services'. This report was issued with a series of recommendations for the sector, government and services. We brought this report to the attention of staff with a face-to face-briefing request to discuss what we need to do individually, and as a Service, to foster a healthy and supportive culture in line with the Core Code of Ethics. We continue to monitor our progress against these recommendations via regular Performance meetings and governance boards, reporting to HMICFRS as required.

To read the full report visit:

www.hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk

3 Our Statement of Intent

The Service's Statement of Intent was published as an acknowledgement that the Service, like all organisations, has its issues, but that we welcome people with both visible and invisible differences and hold all our staff to the highest standards in terms of supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.

It sets out the Service position regarding inappropriate behaviours and is not intended to stifle, but to encourage constructive conversations around equality, diversity and inclusion within teams. It is designed to support our staff in terms of being able to raise issues and concerns regarding inappropriate behaviours. This statement linked with the Core Code of Ethics are key aspects of the Service's approach to encouraging positive cultural change.

④ Safeguarding

"We believe that adults and children must be protected from harm at all times. We believe every person should feel and be safe.

Safeguarding is work that enables individuals to retain independence, wellbeing and choice and to live a life free from abuse and neglect. We want to make sure that everyone we have contact with knows this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.

We want everyone who has contact with the service to use the services we offer in safety. We want parents and carers who have contact with our Service to be supported to care for their children in a way that promotes their child's health and well-being and keeps them safe.

Responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding is part of the organisation's business model lies with the Area Manager of Prevention, Protection and Partnerships. However, it is important to understand that safeguarding is the responsibility of all our people - whether a paid employee, volunteer, operational or support staff and independent of level of managerial responsibility.

Our Safeguarding Policy is not only for our people to use when they have either recognised a Safeguarding concern when performing their role or for when a Safeguarding concern has been brought to their attention from a colleague; it should also be used to assist all staff, apprentices and volunteers and support them as individuals if they have recognised a Safeguarding concern, either for themselves as individuals or if they have concerns for their family members, friends or neighbours.

We all have a responsibility to ensure safeguarding and prevention of abuse".

Michelle Hickmott,
ACFO - July 2023

Training:

The Service ensures that our people are aware of their Safeguarding responsibilities and have introduced different levels of Safeguarding training:

Level 1: Adults and Children's Safeguarding – delivered via our on-line learning platform LearnPro (mandatory training for ALL staff and volunteers)

Level 2: Delivered face to face to those who have direct contact or support those with direct contact with vulnerable adults and children or those with line management responsibility and who are likely to support staff with safeguarding concerns

Level 3: Delivered face to face for those who have strategic, governance and accountability responsibilities within the organisation. It also supports those who may be an out of hours contact for those that have been contacted in relation to a concern with a Person in a Position of Trust (PiPoT).

Level 4: Is for the Services Strategic Safeguarding Leads; the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) and Area Manager for Prevention, Protection and Partnerships. Leads are required to complete Level 4 training facilitated by the local County Council. Other Designated Safeguarding Leads are required to complete the train the trainer Safeguard training facilitated by the NFCC.

Policies and Procedures:

The Service has a Safeguarding Policy, which is reviewed every 3 years and routinely amended as and when required.

The Service utilises the NFCC Safeguarding Self-Assessment Toolkit and the NFCC Safeguarding Fire Standard to support our Safeguarding processes.

The Service utilises the NFCC National Operational Guidance (NOG) Framework to support and influence our Safeguarding duties and responsibilities.

Reporting Measures:

The Service produces a quarterly Safeguarding Report that is shared at the Prevention and Protection Directorate – learning outcomes including lessons learnt are shared accordingly.

Safer Recruitment:

From 6th July 2023 Fire & Rescue Authorities are now listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions). As such, all fire and rescue authority employees are eligible for a minimum of Standard Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. This new eligibility augments existing access to Basic DBS checks for all employees and Enhanced DBS checks with a check of the relevant adults' or children's barred list for those employees who undertake regulated activity.

Appropriate criminal records checks are crucial to allow fire and rescue services to understand and mitigate risk, to protect colleagues and the public, and to support high standards of integrity. Therefore, we will be reviewing our DBS check process procedure and will be implementing any changes that are required.

Safeguarding Boards:

The Service has established an internal Safeguarding Board meeting to include Terms of Reference, attendees include the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and the Prevention, Protection and Partnership Lead along with Delivery Group Leads and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

The Service is also represented at the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSASPB) and contribute to Annual Reports, Audits, Safeguard Adults Reviews (SAR's) and meetings.

Our **Priorities**

This Safety Plan sets out the priorities, which support our vision of making Staffordshire 'the safest place to be' and are driven by our assessment of the risks across the county.

Ensuring that our communities are protected by a first-class fire and rescue service is at the heart of everything that we do.

We recognise that delivering these priorities will depend on collaboration, co-operation and effective communication.

Our Strategic priorities support Staffordshire's Police Fire and Crime Commissioner's priorities as set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024.

We have set out our priorities below alongside those of the PFCC to show how our priorities support and complement each other:

Help people most at risk
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

1 Prevention and early intervention

What we aim to do - Develop a detailed community risk profile of Staffordshire, so that we can use our resources in the most efficient and effective way.

To prevent fires and respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies we will:

- Work together with our partners across the county to share information and create a more detailed understanding of the risks to our communities and identify the people and properties most at risk
- Prioritise these risks to ensure our activities have the most positive impact on community safety
- Develop targeted activities to make the most efficient use of our resources and minimise our impact on the environment
- Work with partners to educate our communities and share goals to reduce duplication and inefficiencies in the public sector.

Protect people and places
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

2 Protecting Staffordshire and its people

What we aim to do - Reduce and remove risks in our communities using a combination of prevention, protection and response activities and help make Staffordshire a safer place to live, work and visit.

To protect our people, buildings, the environment and reduce local risk we will:

- Continue to modify and develop our activities to embrace the changing needs of the county and use advances in technology and techniques to ensure our response to emergencies is efficient and effective.
- Contribute to building communities which are fit for the future – resilient, healthy and sustainable.
- Contribute to ensuring that buildings in Staffordshire are safe for residents and visitors for generations to come.
- Ensure that we have the capability to meet new and emerging risks from incidents that may involve flooding, wildfire, terrorism or supporting other emergency services.

A flexible and responsive service
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

3 Public confidence

What we aim to do - Report regularly on our progress and communicate openly about our plans so that, they are clearly understood, meet our legal duties and provide assurance to the public in a way which is transparent and easy to scrutinise.

To maintain public confidence and trust in the service we will:

- Ensure plans and resources are in place to provide a flexible efficient and resilient response to emergency incidents
- Consult with our communities and listen to our people when developing our plans and services
- Provide evidence that our activities are based on a recognised need and are targeted where they are needed most
- Adopt a transparent and easily understood approach to planning and reporting throughout the service.

A fire and rescue service for tomorrow
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

4 Service reform

What we aim to do - Develop and support a diverse, healthy and highly professional workforce who are motivated and empowered to improve our service.

To ensure we are effective, efficient and able to transform the service to meet the challenges ahead we will:

- Invest in our people by providing them with the right equipment, training and skills to keep them safe, encourage innovation and inspire our future leaders
- Continue to strive to improve the services we provide
- Be honest and open, encouraging people to be themselves and treat each other with kindness and respect
- Promote a positive and supportive culture committed to improving the health, fitness and wellbeing of our people
- Work with our communities and partners to improve the diversity of our workforce.

Making it **Happen**

1 Prevention and early intervention

Develop a detailed community risk profile of Staffordshire so that we can use our resources in the most efficient and effective way to help prevent fires and protect the most vulnerable people in our communities.

You know that, in an emergency, when you dial 999, we will respond. However, what most people do not realise is that part of our job is to prevent incidents before they happen. We carry out a number of activities, all aimed at making our Staffordshire communities safer and stronger. We know that responding to emergencies is our first duty, but we do not want people to need us in an emergency. We would much rather help prevent fires and other emergencies from happening in the first place. We run a number of services designed to inform and help members of the community to protect their homes and business premises. Whether it is educating children or raising awareness of fire safety among business owners, we know that what we do can have a significant impact - reducing risk and saving lives.

We deliver thousands of Safe and Well visits each year. This is part of a nationally recognised approach taken by fire and rescue services, whereby considering health, social and lifestyle factors alongside fire risks, we will be able to provide support and advice where needed.

We work with partners and other agencies to identify the most vulnerable people in our communities and this helps us to be more efficient and effective by targeting our resources where they are needed most.

During these visits, we speak to residents about a wide range of topics, such as fire safety, physical and mental health, wellbeing and general lifestyle choices, in addition to fitting smoke detection where required. We work closely with many partner organisations who can also contribute to improving the wellbeing of an individual, following a referral from us. In addition to this, we deliver a range of preventative campaigns and interventions such as reducing small deliberate fires (our Flames Aren't Games campaign), focusing on road and water safety, supporting businesses and reducing fire deaths and injuries in accidental dwelling fires by highlighting risks associated with living alone.

We also visit around 400 business and other non-domestic premises each year, as it is our legal duty to enforce fire safety legislation. These visits help keep people safe in their homes and the buildings they visit. We know that the tragic fire in Grenfell Tower has highlighted the need to enforce fire safety laws and we want to increase our work in this area.

We know that the structure and use of many buildings has been altered since they were built. Unfortunately, we know that these changes can increase the risk from fire for building users and our firefighters. We have a responsibility and duty to ensure that building owners are keeping their buildings safe and complying with their legal duties. We are

increasing the size of our teams who focus on this work and want to increase the number of buildings we inspect.

We would like to target the most vulnerable people to visit and support them with our Safe and Well visits and increase the number of premises we visit to help with their fire safety procedures.

We will also explore the use of new technology to improve the way we deliver our messages to ensure they have the maximum impact. This has already proved successful with our Safe+Sound interactive pods, which provide an interactive and immersive learning experience for children, young people and other groups to encourage them to be safe and make positive lifestyle choices.

The Service aims to continue its work within the community and increase its delivery of Prince's Trust programmes in order to help more young people achieve their goals and be safe and healthy. Working with the Prince's Trust, the Service helps young people aged between 11 and 30 to improve their employability skills and secure further training and education.

We work with partners and share information, data and intelligence to help us improve our understanding of the risks and understand likely vulnerability in our diverse communities. This also allows us to identify current and emerging risks to our organisation and prepare our firefighters for the emergencies they may face. We use information from groups including other emergency services, the Staffordshire Resilience Forum, local authorities, National Health Service and numerous other public and business sector partners where possible to give us a 'joined up' view and richer picture. This helps us all to develop more relevant, efficient and effective public services. We will be reviewing how

we can deliver all of our prevention services more efficiently and effectively.

We will be looking to refocus the activities of our teams and assessing how we can deliver the most impact in terms of improving community safety and reducing operational demand.

Where appropriate, and possible, we will explore opportunities for working with partners such as the police, local authorities and other emergency services to deliver some of these activities jointly where we can prove it adds real value to our communities. We will continue to seek opportunities to share premises and information where this will be mutually beneficial and contribute to improving community safety whilst reducing demand on public services and our impact on the environment.

We propose to continue exploring ways of working collaboratively with partners, such as police and health, to improve our effectiveness and efficiency. The focus of this work will be to improve the safety, health and wellbeing of our people and our communities rather than looking primarily to save money.

Making it **Happen**

2 Protecting Staffordshire & its people

Protect people and places
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

Reduce and remove risks in our communities using a combination of prevention, protection and response activities and help make Staffordshire a safer place to live, work and visit.

We will work with businesses and other non domestic premises to help them comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005. We will use intelligence systems and data provided to form a risk profile of non-domestic premises within Staffordshire. We plan our inspection programme around those premises that are at most risk of having a fire, and where a fire is likely to create a risk to life.

We will also use information gathered from visiting premises to plan our response should an emergency occur. Our fire safety teams aim to reduce the risk those premises pose to both members of the public and our firefighters. Where fire safety deficiencies pose an obvious risk to life, we will take formal enforcement action, which can include prosecuting irresponsible business owners.

We will continue to review the findings and outcomes of the independent enquiry following the Grenfell Tower fire. We use any learning from this and other recent incidents to inform and improve our fire safety strategy and policies and ensure that our teams are suitably trained and resourced. We will continue to work with planning authorities, local authority building control, approved inspectors and architects to ensure buildings are designed with fire safety in mind. This includes ensuring that the potential risks presented by buildings constructed using modern methods of construction such as cladding or timber framed are addressed.

We will promote the use of sprinklers at every opportunity and consider how new technologies and modern methods of construction, e.g. timber framed buildings, can influence building stability and integrity. Sprinklers reduce the risk of large-scale fires developing or spreading, helping to safeguard both residents and firefighters. Our Community Sprinkler Project aims to have sprinklers fitted in all mid to high-rise buildings in Staffordshire by 2026. Our fire engineers will work with the owners of premises housing those most at risk in case of fire to promote the use of sprinklers.

We will continue to develop ways of assessing how we perform operationally, identifying learning to ensure that where appropriate any changes to policy, guidance, equipment and training are implemented in a co-ordinated way. Stations and crewing arrangements will be based on analysis of risk and demand within our communities and taking into account the needs of the whole county. We will explore more flexible ways of working and continue to review how we prepare for and respond to emergencies, including working and learning with others and making the most of technology.

We propose to look at the way we crew our fire engines and review our on-call firefighter duty system to see how we can maximise your availability for responding to emergency calls. Currently, we require on-call firefighters to live or remain within five minutes of a fire station whilst on-call. This restricts the pool of talented people we can recruit. We would like to expand the areas we recruit from, as this will help us to keep our fire engines available.

We will plan to respond to all reasonably foreseeable events and ensure that when we experience periods of high demand we can meet the expectations of the public and sustain our efforts without increasing risks to our firefighters. We have arrangements in place to share fire engines and crews across our neighbouring county's borders if the need arises; each arrangement ensures that our neighbours will also help us if our demand rises.

We currently have a range of different vehicles, equipment and crewing systems. We would like to increase the range of options available to us so that we can tailor our approach to best suit each emergency. We believe this would make us more efficient and effective.

We support the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit, which co-ordinates multiagency training, planning for and response to complex incidents that would have a large impact on our county, e.g. pandemic illnesses, wide-scale flooding or terror-related incidents. We have robust business continuity plans in place to deal with major disruption such as floods, cyber-attack, pandemics and loss of a building. We test these regularly to ensure we are resilient and able to respond and carry on should a catastrophic event occur.

The national resilience programme was developed to provide equipment and trained staff which could be sent anywhere in the country to incidents that would otherwise overwhelm local resources. We have high-volume pumping equipment, and enhanced logistical support vehicles (used most recently at the Whaley Bridge dam incident) and detection identification and monitoring teams (to identify unknown chemicals). We also have trained waste fire and wildfire tactical advisors who provide expertise within Staffordshire and can respond nationwide if needed.

Making it **Happen**

3 Public confidence

Report regularly on our progress and communicate openly about our plans so that, they are clearly understood, meet our legal duties and provide assurance to the public in a way which is transparent and easy to scrutinise.

A flexible and responsive service
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

From 1 August 2018, in addition to overseeing Staffordshire Police, the Staffordshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) became responsible for the governance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service with responsibility for ensuring the local community is protected by an effective fire and rescue service and holding the Chief Fire Officer to account for delivering that vision.

The PFCC must produce a Fire and Rescue Plan setting out the strategic vision, priorities and objectives for the fire and rescue service in the county. Whilst our plans could be combined, we have agreed to develop separate plans. In developing the objectives in our Safety Plan, we have taken into account the four strategic priorities set out in the commissioner's Fire & Rescue Plan.

We propose to publish our Safety Plan as a 'live' document on our website rather than publish in printed format, as this is more efficient and better for the environment. Readers will be able to print their own hard copy for reference if they wish to do so. By doing this, we will also be able to demonstrate the clear links between the priorities in our Safety Plan, the risks we face across Staffordshire, and how our local station plans support our prevention, protection and response activities. This means we can also adapt our plan in line with the changing needs of our communities and clearly show you the impact, or effect, of any changes we make.

Underneath this Safety Plan sits a hierarchy of more detailed directorate and departmental plans. We ensure that our plans are simple to understand, revised annually and based on realistic and achievable expectations. Through our planning process, we should be able to evidence and clearly demonstrate why something should be done and importantly to identify how it will make a difference. Public and firefighter safety is paramount, using our finances and resources to deliver better outcomes for our communities. These plans will be available on our website and will show how we use prevention, protection and response activities to prevent fires and other incidents and reduce the impact of identified risks on our communities.

It is important that we review our plans and performance regularly to ensure that we are targeting our activity appropriately and consistently improving and innovating our prevent, protect and response activities.

Our local service delivery groups ensure that best practice is identified and shared by scrutinising our performance at a very detailed level.

Oversight of our performance is provided by a number of strategic scrutiny boards (both internally and via the Staffordshire Commissioner's office), which provide challenge ensuring we continue to deliver the most efficient and effective service whilst keeping our communities and firefighters safe.

Both the commissioner's plan and this Safety Plan are subject to scrutiny by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel. Regular public performance meetings are held which include reports on our performance ensuring progress against local and national performance indicators remains on track.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires us to provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. We do this by publishing an annual Statement of Assurance, which we use as a reporting mechanism to let you know how we are doing and tell you about progress against the objectives in our Safety Plan. We will continue to do this and we will also use it as an opportunity to keep you informed about our plans once we fully understand the impacts of the challenges we face.

The next few years are likely to be the most challenging and uncertain we have known. Therefore, we will continue to work through various scenarios, which will help us understand and prepare for the possible issues that we may face. This work will help to inform how we consult, engage and where necessary negotiate in order to allocate resources and shape our service to ensure we maintain the best possible outcomes for our staff and communities.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS)

The Policing and Crime Act of 2017 includes provisions for HMICFRS to conduct assessments and issue reports concerning the operational efficiency, effectiveness and leadership of fire and rescue authorities in England, in addition to carrying out all national policing assessments.

The primary goals of these inspections are to enhance the quality of fire and rescue services and minimise local risks, identify good practice, drive transformation and foster greater openness and responsibility towards local communities. Through its inspections, HMICFRS enables the public to see how well their local service is performing and improving.

These inspections focus on three key themes:

- **Effectiveness** (how effective we are at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks)

- **Efficiency** (how efficient we are at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks)

- **People** (how well we look after our people).

In 2022, HMICFRS completed its second full assessment of all fire and rescue services in England. Its report – Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 – Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service was published on the 27th July 2022. The report acknowledged that we are 'Good' at being effective in understanding and preventing fires and other risks and responding to major and multi-agency incidents. Inspectors also said we are 'Good' at identifying people in our communities who are most at risk from fire and we work with our partners to reduce this risk.

The inspection noted how we have responded positively and proactively to learning from the Grenfell Tower tragedy and have improved the safety of residents in Staffordshire who live in high-rise buildings through our sprinkler scheme.

We were also rated as 'Good' in how we make the Service affordable now and in the future. We continuously look for ways to improve our effectiveness and efficiency and in doing so we need to make sure that we make best use of new technologies to transform the way we provide our services.

The Inspectors rated us 'Good' at getting the right people with the right skills, managing performance and developing leaders as well as how we look after the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.

However, there were a number of areas in which we were rated as 'Requires Improvement'. HMICFRS has made some recommendations in the report, and has identified 20 'Areas for Improvement', which the Service has now created an action plan to address. The progress of this action plan is scrutinised internally through the Service's governance boards, and by the PFCC. Whilst disappointing, only by going through this inspection process can we identify and make improvements, in order to make things better for our staff and our communities.

In its Round 3 Inspections, which commenced in 2023, HMICFRS will measure fire and rescue services against the 'characteristics of good performance'. These characteristics describe the levels of performance needed for a service to achieve a grade of 'good' and assessments are given with the aims of promoting improvements in fire and rescue and highlighting where a service is doing well and where it needs to improve.

HMICFRS ratings are similar to those used by OFSTED for school inspections. In previous inspections services would attract a rating of, outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate. A change to this current round of inspection is the addition of an 'adequate' grade. This brings the assessments in line with those of policing and enables HMICFRS to state more precisely, where it considers improvement is needed and highlight good performance more effectively. Inspection reports are available to the public via the HMICFRS website:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk

Making it **Happen**

4 Service reform

Develop and support a diverse, healthy and highly professional workforce who are motivated and empowered to improve our services.

A fire and rescue service for tomorrow
(Staffordshire Commissioner)

We recognise that our people are our most valuable assets. The people who work and volunteer for us work hard to make sure we are delivering our services efficiently and in the most effective way. We currently have circa 626 firefighters (whole-time and on-call), over 200 support staff and 78 volunteers working in various roles around Staffordshire, all with one common goal; to ensure the people of Staffordshire are as safe as possible. We will ensure our people are equipped and trained to carry out their roles to the best of their ability and to encourage them to reach their full potential.

Our headquarters provides fantastic training facilities using the most real-life scenarios possible. We continue to develop the training and capabilities of firefighters to make sure that we can meet the changing demand caused by new and emerging risks. For example, we have developed and delivered a course dedicated to the incident command of complex waste fires. We provide core prevention training to firefighters and new prevention staff through our accredited community safety module.

The service needs to continually improve, adapt and evolve to be able to thrive in a time of unprecedented change and financial challenge. Our people are at the heart of that. We encourage our people to explore new ways of working and embrace new technology.

We have a strong and enviable record in keeping our people and our communities safe. Over the life of our last Corporate Safety Plan (2017-2020) we made a number of significant changes and transformed the way in which our services are delivered across Staffordshire, to improve how efficient and effective we are and, to ensure our help is directed where it is needed most, such as:

- Where practical and cost effective, offering and providing shared facilities and response hubs for fire, police, ambulance, health, local authorities and free space for voluntary groups at our community fire stations

- Collaborating with Staffordshire Police to deliver shared services including supplies, logistics, occupational health and a joint transport and engineering facility. Our communications, estates, finance, human resources and procurement teams moved to the police in 2019 creating more shared functions

- The introduction of 11 new fire engines in 2019 equipped with new technology and state-of-the-art equipment helping to improve firefighter safety and the way we respond to incidents

- Developing our multi-agency schools and community safety education programmes with the introduction of our interactive Safe+Sound pods. These offer immersive sessions aimed at encouraging people to make informed and positive lifestyle choices helping to improve their health, safety and wellbeing

- Funding our Community Sprinkler Project, which aims to have sprinklers fitted in all mid to high-rise buildings in Staffordshire by 2026

- Delivering a range of programmes in partnership with the Prince's Trust to young people, many whom who have problems associated with a lack of confidence, stress, social isolation, mental issues, and alcohol/substance misuse

- Working with partners to transform our successful home fire risk checks into Safe and Well visits, which now focus on health and wellbeing, as well as fire safety. These visits help to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities and assist in reducing demand upon other public services

We have achieved all this in the context of reduced funding by remodelling our operational duty systems and crewing methods, reducing the amount of management positions in the organisation and re-designing our staffing models, allowing us to focus on valuable prevention and protection work.

We are confident that our positive approach to transformation and better understanding the needs of our communities places us in an excellent position to continue working in a way that best protects Staffordshire, its people and the environment.

Although our funding for the future is uncertain, we hope to continue to employ the right people who embody the ethos of the service. Our cultural message is at the heart of all we do. We strive to be inspirational role models who motivate each other and promote values of trust and integrity. Treating each other with respect and considering the wellbeing of others is key. Together, with our cultural message underpinning our activities, we aim to ensure Staffordshire is the safest place to be now and in the future.

We put health and wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. As part of our Wellbeing Strategy, we provide a number of ways in which our people can access further support should they need it. We adopt the 'safe person' concept for our operational crews who work in inherently hazardous dynamic environments to ensure their safety at all times.

We propose to continue to strengthen our culture of openness, trust and inclusivity. We will seek to ensure that the makeup of the service reflects the communities we serve.

We want our workforce to be more reflective of society at all levels in the organisation. Having a range of perspectives, cultures and experiences brings a greater understanding to our organisation, which contributes to decision making. We will take positive action to help encourage recruitment from underrepresented groups. We want to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for our employees, the communities we serve and our partners as we understand these are mutually beneficial relationships.
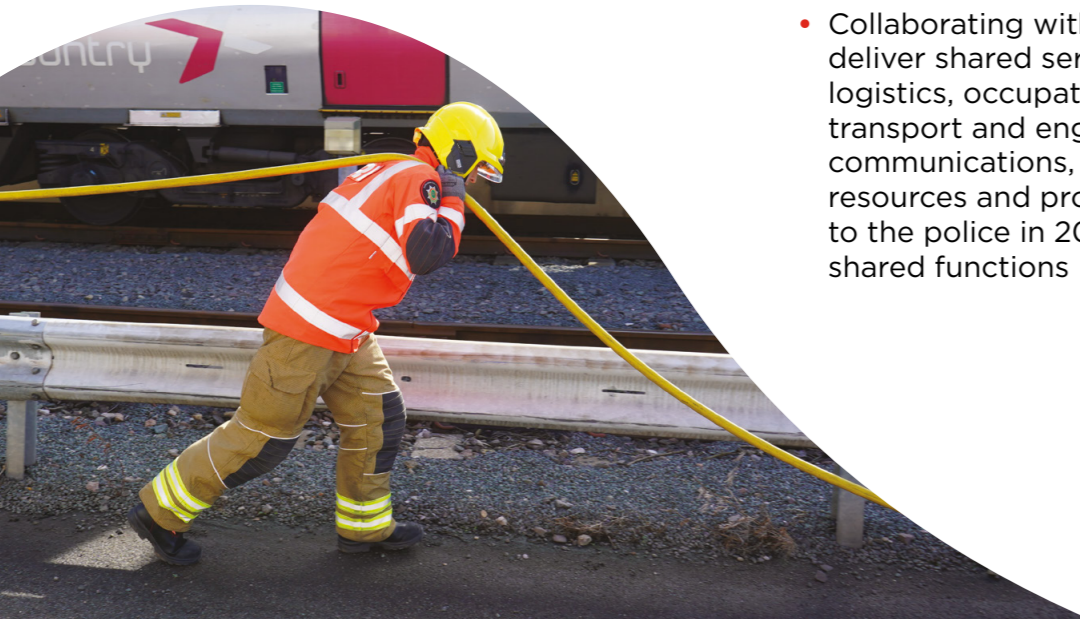
Our **Achievements**
Service transformation programme

Over the next couple of pages we've set out our Priorities with some examples of our achievements and the work we have been doing to support our people, partners and our communities over the life of this Safety Plan.

Service Transformation is necessary to ensure that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service can continue to deliver 'a modern, efficient, and sustainable level of service to the public' that prioritises the safety of both our staff and our communities. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer oversees the Service's Transformation Programme, which aligns to our Safety Plan 2020-2024 priority of 'Service Reform' and the Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024, which prioritises a 'flexible and responsive service' and a 'fire service for tomorrow'.

A Transformation Board was formed in Feb 2022, with representatives from various areas of the Service. Its purpose is to investigate ways to transform the Service and ensure its financial sustainability. The Board meets regularly to monitor and evaluate progress through an action plan, while also providing recommendations through the relevant governance channels.

A number of the work streams that are aligned with the Service's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) have already been considered and completed such as a high-level management restructure, the change to a minimum of four staff on whole-time fire engines, a review of operational exercises, review of incident command and outreach training and the 'On-call Nine-Point Plan' to improve availability of fire engines and crews.

As part of our regular operations, we have also taken into account additional work streams. For instance, we have been working on a 'Clean Concept' initiative to minimise operational staff's exposure to contaminants from fires. Additionally, we have initiated a project to review the standards and accreditation for our fire investigation officers.

There are also a number of projects being explored currently, such as:

- Roving resource concept in South Staffordshire

- Enhanced Rescue Pumps

- More flexible crewing of our on-call appliances

This work is transforming the Service to ensure that it delivers even better outcomes for our communities and at the same time means that the Service is working more efficiently. It is estimated that the delivery of the transformation programme will achieve a recurring saving of circa £1 million for the Service.

Prevention and early intervention

"Collaborate with other agencies to improve the safety and wellbeing of our communities"

Working with Staffordshire County Council to identify vulnerable households to help save on their winter fuel bills with advice about the Household Support Grant during Winter Warmth visits.

"Work with partners to share information and identify those most at risk"

Creation of a Falls Response team in partnership with the National Health Service (NHS), Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT).

"Prioritise risk to ensure our activities have the most impact"

Our Living Alone campaign aimed to increase fire safety awareness and reduce the number of incidents involving those aged 45 plus who live alone as our statistics showed that if you live alone you are nearly four times more likely to be seriously injured or killed in a house fire

Supporting health colleagues to deliver COVID testing and vaccination clinics and distribute anti-viral medications to the most vulnerable people in our communities.

"Develop targeted activities to be more efficient and reduce our impact on the environment"

The Clean Concept principle is a drive toward reducing exposure of our crews to post-fire contaminants. Through a process of cleaning, containing and controlling we can reduce the incidence of contaminants reaching our appliances and workplaces.

Protecting Staffordshire and its people

"Using innovative ways of working and advances in technology"

Development of on-line Safe+Sound educational safety programme for delivery in schools.

Working fire hydrants are essential for firefighters to be able to access water sources for fighting fires and protecting the public. We have trained crews at all 10 of our whole-time stations to support our hydrant technicians in the testing of the 39,000 hydrants across Staffordshire.

"Help build safe and sustainable communities"

Launch of our new Environmental and Sustainability Strategy 2022-2027 with a focus on reducing pollutants, improving air quality and work environments and reducing our carbon footprint.

"Making sure that buildings in Staffordshire are safe now and, in the future"

In response to the Grenfell Inquiry, our crews received training around dealing with an incident in a tall building to include moving from a stay-put policy to one that involves the evacuation of large numbers of residents. Working with local housing providers, 19 out of the 42 blocks of flats over five storeys identified by our Community Sprinkler project have now been fitted with sprinkler systems.

"Capacity to respond to new and emerging risks"

Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) moved to its new permanent base at Fire Headquarters. The new accommodation provides improved training, exercise and response capability.

Public confidence

"Flexible resilient and efficient response to emergency incidents"

The Service has been awarded an overall judgement of 'Good' for its Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship programme, with some 'Outstanding' areas of note for 'behaviour, attitudes', and 'personal development'

Two new Enhanced Rescue Pumps at Stafford and Longton will ensure we can continue to provide a resilient operational response for incidents requiring technical rescue capabilities.

"Engage with our staff and communities when developing our plans"

We consulted with staff fully in relation to the change to a minimum of three staff on on-call appliances to improve availability and efficiency.

"Transparent and easily understood approach to planning and reporting"

Received 'Substantial Assurance' from independent auditors around our CRMP consultation activity, governance and reporting arrangements.

New Service website, which allows for an improved user experience and enhanced accessibility features to make sure we are reaching all our communities within Staffordshire.

"Our activities are targeted where they are needed most"

Successful collaborative building projects at Hanley and Tamworth, which sees Staffordshire Fire and Staffordshire Police working together in the same buildings with the shared aim of improving the safety in our communities.

Service reform

"Providing the right training and skills and inspire our future leaders"

On-call support officers introduced to help improve availability of our fire engines and other resources. They work alongside other departments like Human Resources, Learning & Development and Corporate Communications to get people interested, through the doors, trained and available to crew their local fire engines.

"Strive to improve the services we provide"

We have actions plans in place to address areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS during its inspections and our progress is monitored and scrutinised through our governance structure.

"A working environment feel expected and can be themselves"

We adopted the Core Code of Ethics, which encompasses five key ethical principles which serve as a foundation for encouraging a positive culture and challenging inappropriate behaviour.

"A more diverse workforce"

The Service has recruited a Positive Action Coordinator to encourage diversity and support applications from underrepresented groups in our communities.

The Service has been awarded foster friendly accreditation status by the Fostering Network, who help organisations to actively support fostering.

"Commitment to improving staff's health, fitness and wellbeing"

Investing in Thrive mental health and wellbeing support app for staff and training a cohort of staff to be Mental Health First Aiders.

Our **Service Area**
Our County

Staffordshire is a landlocked county within the West Midlands of England. The County covers 2,713 square kilometres bordering the Cheshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Leicestershire, Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service areas.

The largest city in Staffordshire is Stoke-on-Trent, which is an independent unitary authority. Lichfield also has city status, although it is significantly smaller and other major towns include the county town of Stafford, as well as Burton-upon-Trent, Cannock, Newcastle- under-Lyme, Leek and Tamworth.

Like much of the UK, our local economy has moved from traditional manufacturing and heavy industry to one based more upon the service industry. These industries include logistics, higher education, research and development, tourism and hospitality, creative and cultural businesses, construction, and business services. Staffordshire is home to a number of national distribution hubs and several large industrial sites and warehouses.

The county has two universities, Keele and Staffordshire University, together with a number of further education colleges across the county with specialisms such as engineering, agricultural and animal management, horticulture and construction. There are several significant and internationally linked research locations at these universities and at Keele University Science Park and Staffordshire Technology Park. We also have a significant stock of heritage buildings such as Lichfield Cathedral, Shugborough, Boscobel House and environmental sites of special interest.

There are major growth plans that will see approximately 30,000 new homes built across Staffordshire in the next decade or so, along with a continued increase in employment of circa 20,000 new jobs.

The road, rail and waterway infrastructure include the M6 and A500 main arterial roads, major rail routes, rivers and canals.

Staffordshire is an incredibly diverse county. In stark contrast to its industrial heritage, it is also home to vast areas of wild moorland and rural farmland. Residents and visitors alike enjoy country parks such as Trentham and Chasewater, and Cannock Chase (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

"Staffordshire is a complex and diverse place and our approach to keeping them safe reflects this".
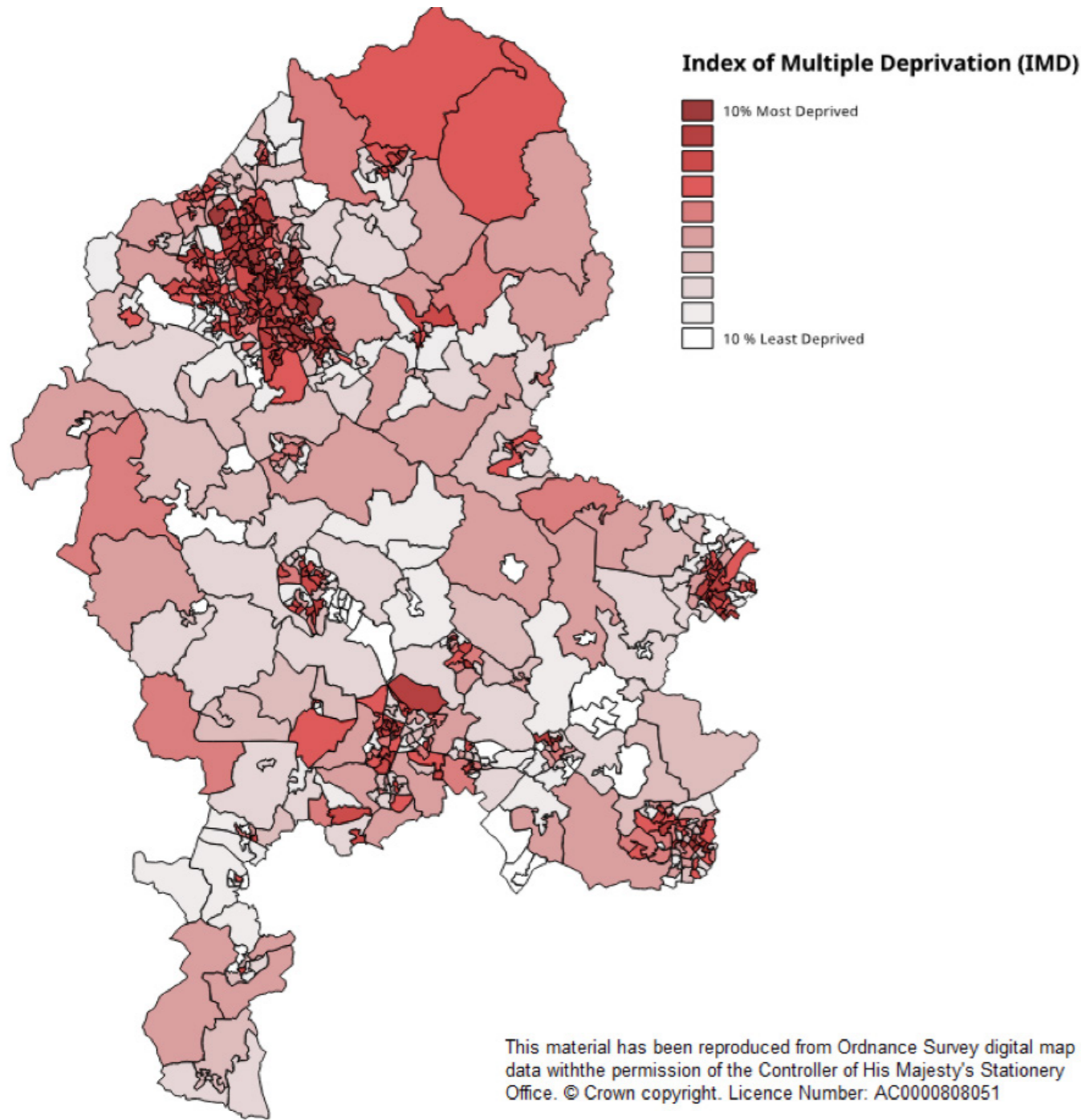
Our Communities:

The area of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, for which the Fire and Rescue Authority (Staffordshire's Police Fire and Crime Commissioner) has responsibility, has a population of circa 1.2m. Over 80% of Staffordshire is classified as rural with a quarter of the population living in rural areas. Overall the population is ageing, with predictions of an increase in the 65+ age band by 122,300 and in the over 85's by 44,500 by 2035 (35% of residents will be aged 65 or over by the year 2037). This has considerable implications for us as a fire and rescue service as the members of the public most likely to perish in an accidental dwelling fire are the over 65s.

Around 6% of the total population are from an ethnic minority background, with White Other, Indian and Pakistani being the most prevalent in particular in areas of Stoke-on-Trent and East Staffordshire. Around 20% of residents in the county have a disability. It is useful to note that there is broad variance across output areas with an increased rate within Stoke-on-Trent.

Apart from Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire is divided into the local authority areas of Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, South Staffordshire, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands and Tamworth. These districts are shown on the next page alongside associated areas of deprivation. The image provides a relative guide to areas of multiple deprivation within Staffordshire, with the darker the map the greater the level of deprivation. There are considerable differences in deprivation levels across the county; Stoke-on-Trent stands out as having significant levels of deprivation, with pockets of deprivation in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Burton-upon-Trent and Cannock.

Our **Service Area**
Our County

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

- 10% Most Deprived
- 10 % Least Deprived

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So what does this tell us?

- Our size, geography and rurality present challenges around travel (distances, times and the nature of the roads), and for ensuring even access to our services across the county

- An ageing population requires a wider range of interventions to minimise the need for emergency response

- The higher levels of deprivation can indicate inequalities in access to health, education and others services which can affect the wellbeing of our communities.

Identifying and Understanding our risks

As required by the government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, every fire and rescue service must produce a high-level Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which explains how they use their resources to respond to and reduce the risks they have identified in their local area.

We identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks across Staffordshire and use this information to plan how to control these risks, respond to emergencies and deliver our fire prevention and protection activities in the most efficient and effective way. This means we can make sure we have the right people and resources in the right places at the right time to protect our communities, our buildings, our people and the environment.

Our resources are placed so that we are able to respond to incidents as quickly and as safely as possible. As part of our planning process, we monitor and review the risks within Staffordshire to ensure we remain flexible in our approach and are best placed to suggest improvements where they will benefit the safety of our firefighters and our communities.

We work with other fire and rescue services and partner organisations to identify new and emerging risks, and use this intelligence to prepare our firefighters for the types of emergencies they may face.

This helps us to:

- Improve our knowledge of vulnerability and identify those most at risk

- Better understand the needs of our diverse communities

- Prepare for the challenges ahead

We continue to use and develop a range of data-driven tools, techniques and modelling programmes to help us monitor, assess and anticipate the impact of future changes in risk and levels of demand. These are key to supporting our risk planning processes. They involve the use of both social and demographic data, consideration of local strategic infrastructure plans, industrial strategies and, information and learning from previous emergency incidents.

When planning how we combine our prevention, protection and response activities in the most effective and efficient way possible, we will need to take into account a range of issues, including:

- The changing face of Staffordshire in terms of the risks faced by our communities and our firefighters

- Our size, geography and rurality present challenges around travel (distances, times and the nature of the roads), and for ensuring even access

- The sustainability of our buildings/other assets

- The benefits of new and emerging technologies and tactics.

We will continue to invest in the level of operational training for our staff to ensure that it is effective and meets the foreseeable risks that our firefighters are likely to face in the future.

In planning our response to risk, we work closely with partners including Staffordshire Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service and the Environment Agency. We contribute towards the risk assessment process in the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum, which produces a community risk register drawing upon local and regional risks set against a national risk framework. Through the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit, we are part of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum and regularly take part in joint exercises and training, testing our Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles to ensure we are adequately prepared when crisis hits.

This Safety Plan sets out the priorities, which support our vision of making Staffordshire 'the safest place to be' and are driven by our assessment of the risks across the county. Ensuring that our communities are protected by a first-class fire and rescue service is at the heart of everything that we do. We recognise that delivering these priorities will depend on collaboration, co-operation and effective communication.

Our **Community Risk** Profile

Purpose and Objectives

The Community Risk Profile aims to assess and analyse all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks that could affect our community. This assessment fulfils the requirements outlined in the National Framework, which mandates every fire and rescue authority to comprehensively evaluate risks of local, cross-border, multi-authority, and national significance. Our objective is to provide an evidence-based understanding of the risks faced by our community and to help inform effective strategies to mitigate them.

National Framework

The National Framework emphasises the importance of assessing risks that extend beyond traditional firefighting scenarios, encompassing a wide range of potential threats, including natural disasters, industrial incidents, transportation accidents, and deliberate acts. By working to the National Framework, we ensure that our risk assessment process is thorough, consistent, and aligned with best practices.

> **"The Service defines risk as a 'combination of the likelihood & consequence of a hazardous event'. This supports the NFCC definition and strategic risk management framework".**

National Definition of Risk

On behalf of all UK Fire and Rescue Services, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is working on the Community Risk Programme Definition of Risk Project. The overarching vision of the project is to establish a comprehensive risk framework for the UK Fire and Rescue Service, encompassing an approach that fosters the consistent identification, understanding, and assessment of potential risks.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, is committed to adopting these methodologies and models. By doing so, the Service aims to consistently measure the likelihood and consequence of incidents occurring. This will facilitate a deeper comprehension of existing risks, enabling appropriate and effective mitigation strategies to be implemented.

One of the most important things we must do is demonstrate how we intend to reduce or mitigate the risks to our local communities and contribute to national, cross-border and multi-agency incidents.

If a risk is identified, it doesn't mean it will definitely happen. Identifying emerging issues and changing risks helps highlight any actions we need to take.

Strategic assessment of risk:

- Historical incident data
- National risk (Resilience Direct)
- Community risk register
- Corporate risk
- Operational risk
- Infrastructure and environmental
- Emerging risk

Overview

Working in collaboration with the NFCC, National Operational Guidance (NOG) and other key stakeholders we have developed a fire and rescue risk profile for Staffordshire. Applying analysis and statistical modelling we have:

- Analysed incident and response data of all incident types attended by the Service

- Identified multiple data sources relating to fire and other risks, such as population and demographics, building and road network data.

- Applied random forest modelling to determine risk scores, and to identify which characteristics have the strongest relationship to the likelihood of incidents occurring. For instance, we know that there is a strong relationship between deliberate outdoor fires and crime deprivation (this is the recorded crime for four major crime types, violence, burglary, theft and criminal damage).

- Assessed these relationships and consider how we apply these to the risk profile for Staffordshire.

National Risk Register

The National Risk Register (NRR) is a public version of the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA), evaluating serious risks to the UK. These encompass a wide range of threats to safety, health, infrastructure, and more, whether accidental or deliberate. The NRR outlines 89 risks across nine themes, including terrorism, cyber threats, accidents, societal, and environmental risks. It assesses each risk' likelihood and impact', presenting a "reasonable worst-case scenario" to guide preparedness efforts.

The most significant risk recorded is a further pandemic and every other risk may impact fire Services directly or indirectly. However, all risks will impact our communities.

Other risks identified that will impact on our response as a Service include terrorist and CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) attacks, large transportation incidents (rail, vehicle and aviation), and large fires and explosions including on COMAH (Control of Major Accidents Hazards) sites.

The NRR for 2023 can be accessed using this link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-register-2023

Staffordshire Community Risk Register

The Staffordshire Community Risk Register (CRR) serves a dual purpose: firstly, it guides Contingency Planning, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Management efforts in Staffordshire, ensuring resources are concentrated to address the risks effectively. Secondly, the publication of the CRR aims to provide reassurance to the people and communities of Staffordshire that there is a well-established and proactive risk assessment process in place to manage potential hazards.

There is cross-over between the local and nationally identified risks, however some local specific risk includes; local accidents on motorways and major trunk roads, and railway accidents. The Staffordshire CRR can be accesses using this link:

www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk/Know-your-risks/Know-your-risks.aspx

Current Risks

Dwelling Fires

Dwelling fires have considerable and wide-ranging impacts, affecting individuals, families, and communities. Immediate consequences include property damage, loss of personal belongings, and the potential injuries or loss of life. Over the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), Staffordshire has experienced 1553 Dwelling fires, resulting in 16 fatalities and 49 serious injuries.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the level of risk, we have utilised the NFCC's Domestic Dwelling Risk Model, which measures both the likelihood and consequence of such incidents. The consequence measure considers both life and property, with fatalities or significant injuries indicating a high consequence for life.

For property consequence, the severity is determined by the extent of damage, such as fire spreading to the entire building. The overall consequence rating is a combination of both life and property aspects, providing valuable insights into the risk posed by dwelling fires in the county.

Fully adopt and implement the Prevention Fire Standard
Continue to develop our response teams in prevent knowledge to include person centred framework
Adoption of NFCC Domestic Dwelling Risk Model
We will investigate new targeting methodologies in order to reach those most vulnerable and deliver Home Fire Safety Visits to those that have been identified as being at most risk to ensure we are targeting the correct people in a timelier approach
Implement the Person-Centred Framework, where we will formally move from Safe and Well Visits to Home Fire Safety Visits

Deliver Home Fire Safety Visits to individuals and households most at risk to fire
Educate, train and support employees and volunteers, relevant to their role, in the awareness and importance of Safeguarding and to recognise and report children, young people and adults who are at risk of harm
Offer an additional level of help and support to vulnerable individuals through an extended Safe and Well process
Complete fire investigations to develop learning
Complete fatal or serious incident reviews to develop learning
Comprehensive learning from operational incidents and training of crews, including the adoption of National Operational Guidance
Utilising risk profiles created from fire service and NHS data to identify vulnerable people
Agreements with partner agencies, who can refer vulnerable people in to us for a Safe and Well visit
Adoption of Safelincs online Home Fire Safety Check too
Sharing fire safety and prevention messages through a variety of online platforms
Record vulnerabilities risks against addresses to inform appropriate an appropriate response
Continued involvement on partner agency boards, and steering groups
Continuation of Olive Branch Training
Shared learning from Post Incident Questionnaires
Joint Safe and Well Visits with relevant partner agencies

Current Risks

Road Traffic Collisions

Road traffic collisions present a significant threat to public safety and are a major concern for communities. The consequences of road traffic collisions can be devastating, resulting in injuries, fatalities, and large economic costs. Understanding and mitigating these risks are crucial for ensuring safer roads and protecting lives.

Over the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service responded to 1864 resulting in 45 fatalities, and 104 serious injuries. However, it is important to note that the actual numbers of incidents, fatalities, and injuries are likely to be higher, as the fire Service does not attend all road traffic collisions.

Similarly, to assessing Dwelling Fires, the NFCC have developed a model to evaluating and measuring the risk of RTCs, which can be applied to local fire Services. Where this model differs is that it has used Stats19 data, covering all RTCs involving fatalities or seriously injuries, going beyond what the fire Service directly attends. There is an opportunity to apply the model to local data going forward.

Furthermore, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service is a member of the Staffordshire Safety Roads Partnership, which analyses and educates around the risk RTCs on behalf of the local Services and authorities. With the aim of improving road safety and achieve a sustained reduction in the number of RTCs.

What we are currently doing to reduce risk
Staffordshire Safer Road Partnership identifies priority road user groups, which informs SFRS delivery of road safety education, engagement & training
Comprehensive learning from operational incidents and training of crews, including the adoption of National Operational Guidance
Access to Crash Database on operational incidents
Training and engagement activities co-ordinated with other partners and SFRS specific activities delivered by the Safe+Sound, Prevent Teams, and Operational staff

What we plan to do to further reduce risk
Adoption of 2 Enhanced Rescue Pumps in the county
Adoption of NFCC RTC model to better understand risk
Review of dynamic crew mobilisation to support early phase intervention

Current Risks

Fires in Non-Domestic Buildings

Fires in non-domestic premises pose a significant risk to property, people and businesses. These incidents can lead to devastating consequences, including property damage, business interruption, and potential loss of life. From offices and factories to commercial establishments and public buildings, the threat of fire can affect a diverse range of non-residential settings. Understanding the unique fire hazards and implementing effective prevention and mitigation measures are crucial for safeguarding businesses, employees, and visitors alike.

During the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have attended 924 incidents, resulting in 4 fatalities and 5 serious injuries.

The NFCC have also introduced a model to evaluate and measure risk in Non-Domestic buildings which can be applied to local fire Services. Using national fire Service incident data it has been determined which building types are more likely to be involved in a fire and which have or have the potential to have more serious consequences. Premises of a higher risk include prisons, hospitals care homes, and hotels.

What we are currently doing to reduce risk
Reduce the risk to our business community from fire through our programme of audits of higher risk premises
Use our powers of legal enforcement and prosecution, where this is appropriate to ensure public safety
Fulfil our duty to respond to statutory fire safety consultations from other regulators
Work with premises responsible persons to reduce excessive levels of unwanted fire signals
Expand our protection team competencies and increase our protection activity output
Improve the effectiveness of our risk profiling and resource targeting
Implement assurance processes to ensure that our protection activity is effective and consistent
Utilising Experian Risk Methodology as part of the Risk Based Inspection Programme

What we plan to do to further reduce risk
Use an intelligence led, risk-based approach to target premises which pose the greatest risk to life in the event of fire
Promote regulatory compliance by engaging with and educating local businesses
Take a consistent, fair, and proportionate approach to enforcement of the Fire Safety Order
Work together with other regulators and stakeholders to reduce risk
Maximise capacity and firefighter safety by using operational crews to undertake fire safety checks and audits
Ensuring all staff undertaking protection activity are appropriately qualified and competent to perform their role
Ensure continuous improvement through effective evaluation of protection activities
Align our protection activity to national fire standards and best practice
Adoption of NFCC Other Building Risk Model

Current Risks

Fires in Tall Buildings

Tall buildings present a heightened risk of fire sue to various factors, including their height, occupancy density and complex structure. The Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 serves as a tragic reminder of the potential consequences when fire safety measures are insufficiently addressed in such structures.

The incident at Grenfell Tower brought to light critical issues commonly found in tall buildings that can escalate fires. Inadequate compartmentation, lack of fire-resistant materials, and insufficient evacuation plans were among the factors that contributed to the rapid spread of the fire and difficulties in rescue efforts.

These incidents can be challenging to control and evacuate due to extended vertical distances and limited access for firefighters. This emphasises the need for rigorous fire safety regulations, regular inspections, and comprehensive fire safety systems, such as effective sprinklers, fire alarms and evacuation procedures.

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent has over 41 residential tall buildings and an additional number of tall commercial buildings. In the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have attended 48 fires in residential buildings over 4 storeys.

What we are currently doing to reduce risk

Online Platform for owners to risk information to Service to assist with Service planning and training (Fulfilling legal requirement)

Supporting new and retrofitted sprinkler systems

Full adoption of the regulations imposed by the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 requiring building owners/responsible to provide key information to fire Services and process to ensure information is available to operational crews

Process to ensure information (Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022) is available to operational crews

Tall Buildings included in Risk Based Inspection Programme

What we plan to do to further reduce risk

Introduction of the Building Safety Act, enabling improved cooperation and coordination between responsible Persons

Increase requirements in relation to the recording and sharing of fire safety information thus creating a continual record throughout a building's lifespan

Building Safety Act - make it easier for enforcement authorities to take action against non-compliance, and ensure residents have access to comprehensive information about fire safety in their building

Introduction of a Building Safety Regulator

Deployment of two new Arial ladder platforms at strategic locations within the county to respond to tall building incidents

Current Risks

Wildfires

Warmer temperatures, prolonged droughts, and changing precipitation patterns contribute to drier conditions, increasing the likelihood of wildfire ignition and spread. They lead to the destruction of habitats, loss of biodiversity, and the release of large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

The Service plays a key role in wildfire response, but the increasing frequency and severity of wildfire presents challenges in terms of resource allocation, firefighter safety,

and containment efforts. Effective wildfire prevention measures, including land management practices, early detection, and community education, are essential to mitigate the risks and build resilience against the growing threat of wildfire caused by climate change.

In the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), the Service has attended at least 12 wildfire incidents where there has been considerable levels of fire damage and significant amount of resource needed to resolve the incidents. The Service has improved its recording mechanism for wildfire incidents and continues to invest in its training and equipment to support operational crews.

What we are currently doing to reduce risk
Comprehensive learning from operational incidents and training of crews, including the adoption of National Operational Guidance
Provide Specialist Personal Protective Equipment for all Community Risk and Response personnel
Targeted Prevention Campaigns
School education through Safe and Sound Programme
Adopted a consistent approach to the recording of wildfire incidents
Strategically located off-road and wildfire-related vehicles and equipment
Our Education offer is adapted to meet the needs of partners safety concerns and the Safe+Sound weekly programmes contains timely videos to include localised content where issues have been identified

What we plan to do to further reduce risk
Design and implement an annual wildfire exercise to test the response to wildfire incidents, which will aim to include partner agencies and neighbouring Fire & Rescue Services
Use the wildfire risk score sheets developed with our partners to obtain a more detailed and localised understanding of wildfire risk across Staffordshire
Work with colleagues at Staffordshire County Council to help develop plans for planting the Cannock chase Forest
Undertake a wildfire vehicle/equipment review to ensure continued effective response to wildfire incidents within Staffordshire

Current Risks

Flooding and Water Rescue

Flooding, amplified by climate change, poses significant risks to communities and the environment. As global temperatures rise, extreme rainfall events have become more frequent and intense, leading to an increased likelihood of floods. In the UK, floods have resulted in devastating consequences. They threaten the safety of individuals, damage infrastructure, and disrupt vital Services.

The Service plays a crucial role in responding to flood emergencies, performing water rescues, and ensuring public safety.

However, the escalating frequency and severity of floods may stretch the resources and the capabilities of the Service. The Service can contribute to community education and preparedness, raising awareness about flood risks and promoting safety measures in vulnerable areas.

During the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), Staffordshire Fire and Rescue have attended 51 water rescue and 60 incidents where the Service has had to pump out. This has accounted for 35 incidents where victims were involved, 3 fatalities, 23 injuries of which 3 were serious, and 20 people rescued.

Maintain wading response capability, equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) across all operational stations
Maintain swift water rescue, flood rescue technicians and boat capability at strategic locations
Maintain DEFRA boat capability
Maintain our high-volume pump and hose layer capability
Continue working with partners to develop multi-agency flood plans and rapid catchment flood area response plans
Continue to work collaboratively with key partners for training and equipment provision
Water safety boards (information, advice and guidance) positioned at prominent water risk sites
Education packages offered to schools
Targeted and intelligence led water safety campaigns delivered
Continue to engage with local businesses within high-risk flood areas to provide guidance and ensure fire safety measures are considered in business continuity planning
Safe+Sound weekly programmes contain timely videos to include localised content e.g. frozen water safety in response to incident. On station delivery of safe+Sound adapts to local need - for example ASB is a topic included in Stoke delivery by the Police as they recognise this is an issue in the area and utilise Safe+Sound to educate children on the subject

What we plan to do to further reduce risk
Deploy specialist water rescue resources to assist in the rescue and evacuation of those affected by flooding
Deploy high-volume pumps and hose layer to mitigate the impact of flooding
Utilise drone assets for reconnaissance and situational awareness during wide area flooding
Report areas of notable practice or learning via national or collaborative bodies (national operational learning and joint organisational learning)
Work with partner agencies during the emergency and recovery phase
Targeted prevention activities post incident
Work with partner agencies during the emergency and recovery phase
Arrangements are being made with Canal and River Trust (CRT) to train the education team and our volunteers in their water safety package to enable Safe+Sound to deliver water safety messages as part of our Education offer

Our **Community Risk** Profile

Current Risks

Vehicle Fires

Vehicle fires pose distinct risks to firefighters because of the potential for explosions, rapid fire spread and toxic smoke. The advent of high-voltage batteries in modern electric and hybrid models may further compound these hazards. The close proximity of incidents to busy roads and highways increase the likelihood of secondary incidents. To effectively mitigate these risks, ongoing training and understanding of vehicle technology are critical for firefighter and public safety.

Around 40% of the vehicle fires the Service attends are believed to be deliberate acts. This highlights the ongoing need to grasp underlying patterns and maintain collaborative efforts with the police and other stakeholder, all aimed at reducing risk of these incidents occurring.

During the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), Staffordshire Fire and Rescue have attended 1121 vehicle fires.

What we are currently doing to reduce risk
Provide training and equipment for crews
Use the Service data systems and business intelligence to identify areas where vehicle fires occur
Provide dedicated training for arson reduction to staff to reduce the number of car fires
Work in partnership with Staffordshire Police to reduce the prevalence of road vehicle fires
Provide the latest crash data for all vehicle types to support effective response mechanism

What we plan to do to further reduce risk
Investigate the cause of road vehicle fires
Work with authorities to prosecute those guilty of deliberately setting fire to road vehicles
Consider the deployment of targeted response mechanisms where appropriate, to reduce the demand on other front-line resources
Improve collaboration with emerging EV and hybrid stakeholders to improve response methods and consumer awareness of risks
Maintain latest EV and hybrid crash data to support response and best practice methods of electric vehicle management

Outdoor Fires

Outdoor fires, which can lead to wildfire incidents, pose significant environmental and resource challenges. With these types of incident are particularly exacerbated by periods of intense, as seen in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent during the heatwave of 2018 and 2022.

Many of these outdoor fires combined with larger wildfire place considerable strain on fire Service capabilities. Prevention efforts, public awareness and improved firefighting resources are essential to manage the risks and protect the environment, residents and visitors.

During the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), the Service has attended 4426 incidents. However, the demand has been concentrated during the hotter periods placing considerable demand on fire Service resources.

What we are currently doing to reduce risk
We work with landowners and educate members of the public to reduce the number of fires in the open
We work with Community Safety Partnerships to reduce antisocial behaviour and fire setting
Training and equipment for crews to deal with these types of incidents
Provision of specialist vehicles including high volume pumping equipment, water carrier and 4x4 vehicles to support crews at incidents
Our Education offer is adapted to meet the needs of partners safety concerns and the Safe+-Sound weekly programmes contains timely videos to include localised content where issues have been identified

What we plan to do to further reduce risk
Develop new partnership / stakeholder relationships to improve community awareness
Develop and introduce the latest techniques and methods to manage large scale open area fires
Regular review of technical equipment and provision of specialist vehicles

Our **Community Risk** Profile

Current Risks

False Alarms

While there have been considerable reductions in the number of false alarm incidents the Service attends, it still makes up a large proportion of demand. If we are responding to a false alarm it has an impact on our resources available to respond to true emergencies.

In the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), Staffordshire fire and Rescue Service has attended 9077 false alarm incidents, which accounts 37% of all attended incidents. A large number of these incidents occur in domestic premises (5475) which presents an opportunity to address fire safety concerns and occupier vulnerabilities.

What we are currently doing to reduce risk
Our Unwanted Fire Signal Policy ensures our resources are only sent to high risk premises, e.g. hospitals and care homes, and allows resources to remain available for more serious/life risk calls
Protection teams monitor and act upon premises experiencing false alarms to prevent them happening in the future

What we plan to do to further reduce risk
Improve awareness and guidance for the management of multi occupancy premises
Develop improved stakeholder relationships to improve awareness and frequency of unwanted false alarm causes and identify prevention methods

Special Service Incidents

Special Service incidents cover a wide variety incidents Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service attends. It covers common ring removals, animal rescues, hazardous chemical incidents, assisting other Services, and various types of rescue and extrications.

Due to the large variety of incidents, the Service should continue to prepare the variety of risks as well. This includes the continued development of training, knowledge, and equipment to effectively resolve incidents.

In the last 3 years (Fiscal 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23), there have been 94 fatalities and 56 serious injuries resulting from 4180 Special Service incidents.

What we are currently doing to reduce risk
Animal rescue and rope rescue capability within Service
Hazardous chemical equipment, resource, and training in place
Maintain correct methods of premises entry to support ambulance special Service calls
Analysis of demand demographic to adequately resource and deploy specialist falls response teams

What we plan to do to further reduce risk
Regular analysis of specialist Service call types and demand data to understand future resource demand allocation
Reviews of specialist appliance deployment based on demand analysis / predicted risk
Adoption of evolving emerging specialist Service call risks and evaluation
Include key stakeholder Service demand and analysis to help predict future specialist Service call demand

Emerging Risks

Emerging risks pose dynamic challenges to the Service, demanding continuous adaptation and preparedness. As the role of the Service expands beyond traditional incidents, new and evolving risks require heightened attention. Emerging risks specific to the Service encompass a range of factors, including new technologies, climate change, and the pressures of the cost of living on communities.

Embracing a proactive approach to these emerging risks is essential for the Service to effectively protect lives, property, and critical infrastructure. To navigate these complexities, the Service should embrace the adoption of national research, data models, and guidance provided by bodies such as the NFCC.

By leveraging such resource, the Service can gain a comprehensive understanding of emerging risks and tailor response and preventative strategies to ensure the safety of firefighters and the communities.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) is a reinforced version of autoclaved aerated concrete, commonly used in roofing and wall construction. In Europe, it gained popularity in the mid-1950s as a cheaper and more lightweight alternative to conventional reinforced concrete.

Structural issues involving RAAC began surfacing publicly in the United Kingdom in the 1990s.

Concerns were amplified this year following reports of an earlier roof collapse at a British primary school, which fell without warning in 2018.

The material still exists in the UK in public buildings such as schools and hospitals, as well as potentially a number of unknown building types. The material's nature makes it difficult to identify these issues before collapse, which has led to the Department for Education issuing emergency closures to a number of schools due to the risk to pupils.

The NFCC are working alongside the Government to identify premises containing RAAC so robust pre-planning can take place. Whilst the main issues are with regards to structural integrity, from a Fire and Rescue point of view the potential issues are as set out below:

- Potential for sudden structural collapse during fire due to either the fire itself, or due to the permeable nature of RAAC and the additional weight from firefighting water

- Entire buildings or areas of buildings closed off, which may affect pre-planned means of escape from premises

- The lack of structural integrity, potentially effecting the structural fire resistance within premises

- The potential to attend incidents where RAAC has collapsed and rescues are required

- Entire buildings or areas of buildings closed off, which may affect pre-planned means of escape from premises

- The lack of structural integrity, potentially effecting the structural fire resistance within premises

- The potential to attend incidents where RAAC has collapsed and rescues are required.

Emerging Risks

Cost of Living

Within the context of the rising cost of living, financial constraints may increase the fire risk for households and individuals and may also increase the number of dwelling fires the Service attends.

The NFCC have reported that nationally the year ending March 2022 that fires caused by candles, which have a high proportion of deaths and injuries, have had their highest numbers for 10 years. This points to a potential change in behaviour of people using more unsafe heating methods that heighten the risk of accidental fires. Additionally, people may resort to unsafe cooking practices, lack of maintenance of appliances, improperly storing flammable materials, and not being able to afford smoke alarms, further increasing their risk from fire.

Recent data shows that the proportion of fuel poor households within the county is increasing, with Stoke-on-Trent having the second highest proportion of fuel poor households of any unitary and local authority.

To address these heightened risks, it's important that the Service implements targeted interventions, education on fire safety practices, and is able to offer advice and suitable referrals to households and individuals.

Nationally significant infrastructure projects

Significant changes to our major road and rail infrastructure introduce unique challenges in terms of emergency response and fire safety. During the construction phase of projects, we have to consider the need for specialist resources for effective fire suppression and rescue operations where we may have the likes of tunnels, bridges and complex depots. The complexity of such projects may necessitate enhanced training and equipment for firefighters to handle incidents specific to the road and railway environment.

Once running, new major road and rail routes introduce potential risks of accidents, derailments, or collisions, which demand advanced response capabilities. The scale of such projects and potential disruption to local communities can also impact the availability of fire services, requiring strategic planning to ensure sufficient coverage and resources.

Adequate collaboration between the fire Service and key stakeholders, risk assessments, and ongoing training are crucial to better understand and mitigate these risks and ensure the safety of both the road and rail infrastructure and staff, fire service personnel and the surrounding communities.

Climate Change - Wildfire

Wildfires pose a significant risk exacerbated by climate change. While there is variation year to year, it is likely that the frequency and intensity of wildfires will increase in the UK. Warmer temperatures, prolonged droughts, and changing precipitation patterns contribute to drier conditions, increasing the likelihood of wildfire ignition and spread. They lead to the destruction of habitats, loss of biodiversity, and the release of large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

The Service plays a key role in wildfire response, but the increasing frequency and severity of wildfire presents challenges in terms of resource allocation, firefighter safety, and containment efforts.

Effective wildfire prevention measures, inc. land management practices, early detection, and community education, are essential to mitigate the risks and build resilience against the growing threat of wildfire caused by climate change.

Flooding

Flooding, amplified by climate change, poses significant risks to communities and the environment. As global temperatures rise, extreme rainfall events have become more frequent and intense, leading to an increased likelihood of floods. In the UK, floods have resulted in devastating consequences. They threaten the safety of individuals, damage infrastructure, and disrupt vital Services.

The Service plays a crucial role in responding to flood emergencies, performing water rescues, and ensuring public safety. However, the escalating frequency and severity of floods may stretch the resources and the capabilities of the Service. The Service can contribute to community education and preparedness, raising awareness about flood risks and promoting safety measures in areas vulnerable to flooding.

New Technology

The emergence of new technologies such as energy storage systems, renewable energy infrastructure, and electric vehicles, poses inherent risks to the Service.

The risks include unfamiliar hazards, unique fire behaviours, and challenges in safely managing incidents involving these technologies.

To mitigate these risks, the Service could prioritise specialist training, collaborate with industry stakeholders, and develop tailored response protocols, therefore enhancing preparedness and effectively address the evolving risks.

Cyber-security

The growing risk of cybersecurity incidents presents a significant challenge to the Service. As digital systems become more integrated into critical infrastructure, the potential for cyber-attacks and disruptions to communication systems increases.

The Service must be prepared to address these risks through training and education of staff, establishing robust incident response protocols, and regularly updating and securing digital infrastructure.

Risk of Terrorist Attack

This is a complex area due to the frequency of new threats being identified and enacted internationally. Events over the last few years, both at home and abroad, have increased the risk of terrorist or self-motivated attack activity impacting on our society. The Service plays a major role in protecting the community in the event of such an incident, and along with the other blue- light services contributes significantly to the planning and training for such events.

The foundation to every multi-agency response is the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP), however we may need to take other factors into consideration when responding to attacks. The JESIP Joint Operating Principles (JOPs) for terrorist attacks have been developed from operational experience of the three emergency Services, as well as learning taken from actual attacks and exercises.

The overwhelming priority will always be to respond quickly and proactively to protect the public.

A special team of firefighters have been trained to operate under the conditions of a terrorist incident. Emergency Services work closely with the Security Services and Government to identify threats and provide effective warning, informing and response planning.

Our Service supports this with national incident liaison officers (NILOs), who can work closely with emergency service partners, and currently provides a local and national capability for mass casualty injuries and decontamination processes.

Multi-agency risk planning and preparedness

We acknowledge our responsibility and commitment towards multi-agency response development by utilising the JESIP principles alongside national frameworks to ensure we maintain a consistent trajectory of improvement and collaboration to deliver a multi-agency response mechanism. This also includes the support and development of cross-border risk information, by sharing incoming and outgoing risk information and data via Resilience direct. This also includes temporary risks such as asylum accommodation and multi-agency major incident planning and collaboration.

Our **Funding**
and how we spend it

Following the meeting of the Police Fire and Crime Panel on 13th February 2023, the Revenue Budget for 2023/24 was approved at £46.5m. The budget included an increase in Council Tax of 4.85% increasing Band D Council Tax to £84.25 equivalent to around £1.62 per week.

This year, the Local Government Finance Settlement offered Council Tax flexibility to the Staffordshire Commissioner of £5 for one year only and following due consideration of the budget precept consultation feedback from local residents the Commissioner decided to increase Council Tax for the Authority below this referendum limit at £3.90.

During the last year the Service has been working closely with the Commissioner, Ben Adams, resulting in £1.1m of savings which has been either delivered or significant progress has been achieved to date and the savings have been incorporated into the Updated Medium- Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The Staffordshire Commissioner quite rightly expects every pound of taxpayer's money invested in fire and rescue to be spent wisely and for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service to continually seek efficiencies. To balance the MTFS, without using reserves, a further £1.3m of additional savings will be required by 2025/26. As part of the Spending Review, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) proposed that across Fire and Rescue Services in England, the fire and rescue sector could create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3% by 2024/25. Our 2023/24 Productivity and Efficiency Plan has now been published. Productivity data captured as part of the new station work routine is being developed to create capacity, performance clarity and assurance within the whole time crews in order to help measure productivity improvements and report back to the Home Office.

Chief Fire Officer Rob Barber recognises and understands the financial challenge ahead, however, he remains committed to investing in the Service and its people and culture to ensure that we have the best equipment, skills and structures from which to deliver the highest level of service to our communities. Our focus upon productivity and efficiency needs to continue but we also need to invest now to provide the platform from which we can improve.

The future will continue to be challenging but given a good record of making savings, smarter use of technology, more efficient crewing models, greater productivity and to share more buildings and back-office costs with Staffordshire Police, the Commissioner and the Service believe this challenge to be achievable.

David Greensmith
Director of Finance

Consultation **Evaluation**

Following our external consultation with the public, partners and stakeholders which took place between the 16 October and the 26 November 2023, it was positive to see the numbers of responses increase significantly from our previous consultation for our Safety Plan in 2019.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to engage with us in order to help to develop a service that offers the best outcomes for our residents.

The societal demographic that we received responses from was both broad and representative of the diversity of the people of Staffordshire. This means that we are able to evaluate the requirements of our communities and to ensure that they are at the heart of our decision making and activities over the next 12 months. Ensuring a consistent and valuable contribution when delivering our services to those most in need.

After evaluating all responses, we have identified how these fit into our four organisational priorities and developed actions against them to reflect community needs and wishes. Aligned to community consultation, our focus for the next 12 months will include:

Prevention and early intervention

It was clear from our communities that people felt very confident in keeping themselves safe in their homes and businesses, and that they were comfortable approaching the Service for assistance when required. Responses identified that they would like us to increase working with the most vulnerable in society and with partner agencies to improve people's lives. As such, we will continue to explore opportunities including our Falls Response initiative, providing early intervention and support. Also our new pilot of the Home from Hospital scheme, working with ambulance and healthcare partners to improve individual outcomes and maximise people's safety in their homes.

Protecting Staffordshire and its communities

Your feedback to maximising our available resources in a flexible manner when responding to varying needs within our communities received a positive response of 87 per cent in favour. As such, we will continue to explore potential opportunities to operate in a new and more efficient way. Any major changes to the way we operate will be presented during the consultation for our next four-year Community Risk Management Plan during 2024 in more detail. This will ensure that communities understand our plans fully and they have the opportunity to offer their feedback.

Public confidence

We received overwhelming responses to our teams and facilities being more visible in communities to increase awareness. We will look to expand on our program of station open days to allow for more community engagement opportunities. Activities will be developed in line with our newly produced Community Engagement Strategy to ensure that the services we deliver meet the diverse needs of our communities.

Service reform

A total of 76 per cent of responses identified that they were concerned about risks associated with new and emerging technologies, such as the increased use of lithium-ion batteries and their associated risks. We will continue to work with partners including the National Fire Chief's Council and stakeholders inside and outside of the fire and rescue sector to understand these hazards. We will then be able to explore new ways of working to manage the response to incidents and also to offer education to communities on ways to reduce their individual risks, whether in their homes or businesses, in line with national best practice.

Our **Future**
Your opinion matters to us

Tell us what you think

As we approach the conclusion of our Safety Plan 2020-2024, we are actively working on our next Community Risk Management Plan, which will guide our activities in the future. It is essential for us to involve our communities to help us shape these plans effectively.

These conversations with our communities, our people, partners, representative bodies and other stakeholders will help us to improve our understanding about your expectations and the services you require from us.

We will use the feedback from these conversations to help influence and develop our plans as we look to deal with future challenges and ensure that we deliver the best outcomes for our people and the communities of Staffordshire.

We encourage involvement from individuals, partners, and local community groups interested in contributing to the development of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's future.

If you would like to take part in the consultation on our new Community Risk Management Plan, or comment on this Statement of Assurance, you can email us at:

consultation@staffordshirefire.gov.uk

or visit our website

www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk

You will also find additional information about our services and activities on our website.

Interested in helping us by becoming an on-call firefighter?

On-call firefighters are paid, part-time firefighters who respond to emergencies just like full-time firefighters. They often have another main job and fit their on-call role around it. They can respond to emergencies from either their home or workplace.

Alerter goes off
If an emergency is called in during their on-call period, they will be notified by their alerter

Go to fire station
They will then make their way to their local fire station, whether this is from their home or work.

Respond to emergency
When at the station, they will then kit up, get in the fire engine and respond to the emergency.

On-call firefighters play a vital role in delivering efficient and effective emergency services to the communities of Staffordshire. As well as responding to emergencies, they take part in community fire safety initiatives in their local area. This includes visiting people in their homes to carry out Safe and Well checks and educating school pupils about fire safety.

If you or someone you know lives, or works, close to one of our on-call fire stations and wants to become an on-call firefighter and make a difference in the community, then we are recruiting.

More information can be found on our external website:

www.staffordshirefire. gov.uk/careers/ on-call-firefighters

Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

Contact

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