



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2020-21

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 23 July 2021

Purpose of Report:

To present the Annual Statement of Assurance 2020-21 to Members for approval.

Recommendations

That Members approve the Annual Statement of Assurance 2020-21 for publication.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework places a statutory requirement on fire authorities to provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters, with due regard to the expectations set out in their Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).
- 1.2 The production of an Annual Statement of Assurance (ASoA) contributes to the requirement for greater public-sector transparency and accountability and through its publication offers and promotes accessibility to information.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The ASoA 2020-21 (attached at Appendix A to this report) provides a review of how the Service has performed against the Year Two ambitions of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan and accompanying Annual Action Plan.
- 2.2 The format of the 2020-21 ASoA is the second of three annual assurance statements for the Strategic Plan 2019-2022. This document follows the same format as the 2019-20 document which was well received by both the Authority and its wider audience. The format of the document was revised in 2019-20 to make the document more engaging and 'reader friendly'. The new format also makes it easier to reference key facts, information, performance information and links to supporting documents.
- 2.3 The ASoA will be hosted on the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) website and be available as a PDF to allow printing of the document if required. Through hosting on the NFRS website, the format can then become accessible for members of the public who use assistive technology and allows modern browsers to translate it in to multiple different languages; making it accessible to all our communities. The published document will also be sent to key stakeholders, partner agencies and community contacts to ensure that it is promulgated effectively.
- 2.4 The ASoA signposts (in the form of links) supporting information that can be accessed on the NFRS website or Fire Authority webpages, for example, the Strategic Plan, Safer Communities Strategy and the Statement of Accounts.
- 2.5 The ASoA gives an overview of the organisational performance over the 2020-21 business year. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that the ability to reach some targets for the year were impacted. Although the ambitious targets in service delivery have been affected, the Service adapted to the situation and delivered a number of achievements, in addition to core functions, that can be celebrated. These are referenced within the document and include:
 - Service personnel delivered 30,721 vaccinations;
 - Urgent care transportation for 1,276 patients;

- Delivering of 12,246 medicine and food parcels;
- Making 3,598 signposting and befriending calls;
- Increasing On-Call availability from 86% to 88.8%;
- Delivering against the sixteen stated Strategic Plan Year Two strategic objectives;
- Detachment of staff to assist partner agencies during the pandemic.
- Responding to 8,992 emergency incidents;
- Meeting the response standard, to respond to incidents, from mobilisation, on average, within eight minutes;
- Reducing attendance to false alarms to 3,828 from 3977;
- Reducing accidents in the workplace by 29%;
- Having 99.6% of operational staff successfully complete their annual fitness test.

2.6 The ASoA details notable achievements which would not have been possible without the combined efforts from staff across the Service, collaboration with partner agencies and support from Fire and Rescue Authority Members.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken due to the nature of this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The requirement to produce an Annual Statement of Assurance is a statutory requirement as directed by the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework Document for England.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the Annual Statement of Assurance 2020-21 for publication.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Annual Statement of Assurance

2020 / 2021



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Introduction

Welcome to our Statement of Assurance

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires us to report on our progress against our Strategic Plan every year.

We do this through our Annual Statement of Assurance. This informs the public and our stakeholders of our performance over the last year.

We launched our Strategic Plan 2019 / 2022 back in April 2019 following a public consultation and this outlines how we will deliver on our vision of creating safer communities.

During year two of our plan, we have worked on programmes including:

- assuring our operational resourcing
- strengthening the sustainability of our on-call workforce
- supporting those in greatest need
- gathering information on high-risk buildings
- collaboration with our partners

You can read more about the service we have provided and our achievements in this Statement of Assurance and by following the links to other published documents on [our website](#) and the [Fire Authority web pages](#).

“Fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance.”

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework Document



Department for
Communities and
Local Government



Figure 1 - Chief Fire Officer John Buckley with Councillor Michael Payne, Chair of the Fire Authority

“This year has been unprecedented in terms of the challenges that faced our Service. While maintaining our focus on preventing incidents, protecting and responding to you, we have adapted to changed ways of working to react to the demands presented by the pandemic.

“While delivering a Service which met these demands, we have also provided resilience and support to our colleagues in other emergency services to help support communities through this difficult time.

“We were extremely proud when our efforts were recognised by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) during our COVID-19 inspection.

The report, published in January 2021, provided a reassuring overview of the Service and stated that we had *'adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively'*. It also praised the support we provided to other public services.

“Our staff stepped up in very difficult circumstances to help protect the most vulnerable in our communities and played their part in supporting those who needed help throughout this challenging time.

“Personally, and on behalf of the Fire Authority, I would like to thank all our staff and our partners for their hard work during this period. It is this continued collective approach that enables us to achieve our vision of creating safer communities.”

Cllr Michael Payne, Chair of the Fire Authority

Key achievements 2020 / 2021

 Incident numbers fell to 8,992 from 9,658 in 2019 / 2020

 Accidents in the workplace fell to 29 from 41 in 2019 / 2020

 Availability of on-call appliances increased to an average of 88.8% from 86% in 2019 / 2020

 False alarms reduced by 3.7% to 3,828 from 3,977 in 2019 / 2020

 The 'Sit-up Service' provided night-time shelter for 145 homeless people during freezing temperatures

 Fitness tests were passed by 99.6% of our operational staff

 We delivered 150 fire, road or water safety initiatives

 There were 2,940 fires – a reduction of 5% on 2019 / 2020

 We attended 465 road traffic collisions – a decrease of 17% on 2019 / 2020

 Sickness absence decreased by 24% over the year

 77% of staff would recommend our Service as a great place to work

 Working within COVID restrictions we conducted 5,888 Safe and Well interventions – a mix of both physical visits for those most at risk and virtual sessions for others

 We completed 336 full fire safety audits and 510 remote desktop audits

Ready, willing, able

Over the past year we are proud to have worked with our partners to provide support to the people of Nottinghamshire during the pandemic.

Our staff carried out a range of activities outside of their normal duties to help communities.



Figure 2 - Figures accurate as of 31 March 2021



Our COVID-19 inspection report by HMICFRS praised us for the positive and constructive way that we engaged with the inspection process and for the contribution that we made to communities during the pandemic. It stated that we had no issues in meeting our statutory duties and that business continuity planning and management is one of our strengths.



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

We received praise from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) for our 'unflinching commitment' to supporting the roll-out of the mass testing and vaccination programmes. NFCC Chair Roy Wilsher stated that the teamwork had been 'inspiring'.



Following an Ofsted monitoring visit in March 2021, we were praised for the 'significant progress' we had made in meeting all the requirements of the successful firefighter apprenticeship programme.



Figure 3 - Joint Police and Fire memorial garden

In October 2020, a new memorial garden was unveiled in honour of firefighters, police officers and staff who have lost their lives in the line of duty. This was opened in the grounds of the new joint headquarters at Sherwood Lodge.

The names of 116 men and women have been added with entries dating back to the 19th century.

Year two priorities

Each year we create an annual Action Plan which identifies the strategic actions that we will focus on in support of our Strategic Plan.

In this second year of the 2019 / 2022 Strategic Plan, we identified 16 strategic actions. Of these, three were major projects continued from year one of the Strategic Plan due to being larger projects. These included the joint headquarters project which will also continue as a year three priority.

In addition to the Strategic Action Plan, every department has an annual business plan which sets out the priorities and objectives for their teams.

These plans focus on delivering and continuously improving the services we provide to our communities.

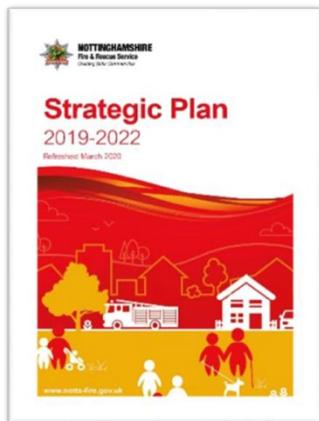


Figure 4 - Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2019 / 2022

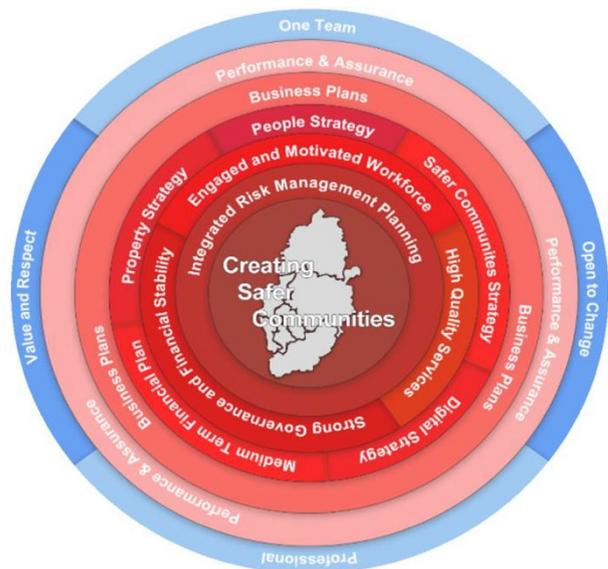


Figure 5 - Circular graphic showing how everything we do is related to creating safer communities

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has a vision of 'creating safer communities' and this is at the heart of everything we do. It shapes our Strategic Plan and objectives and is underpinned by our values.

The way we deliver our services is underpinned by three principles.

These are:

- Delivering quality services
- Maintaining an engaged and motivated workforce
- Ensuring strong governance and financial sustainability

Year two strategic actions

Assure our operational resourcing, maintain the delivery of our core services and assist our partners in supporting communities during the pandemic

We reviewed our normal ways of working to provide support to the emergency response to COVID-19. We responded proactively to all requests while also maintaining a focus on our core service delivery.

Resilience planning and efficient risk management allowed our response, prevention and protection work to continue in line with government guidance

As well as continuing to deliver all of our statutory functions across Prevention, Protection and Response, we worked with other fire and rescue services to support East Midlands Ambulance Service and the health sector – prioritising the use of our equipment, people

and finances where they had the greatest impact within our communities.

Effective communication and trust between our management and staff meant that over 25% of our staff stepped forward as volunteers. Regular online briefings with our principal officers provided an effective and reassuring method of communication for our staff.

Assure our response model

Over 2020 / 2021, we evaluated the move from Central Fire Station in Nottingham to London Road, and the implementation of 'mixed crewing' at stations in Ashfield and Retford which was introduced in 2018 / 2019. The London Road evaluation highlighted that the Service had managed to maintain its response standards while also delivering savings. The changes to crewing had been delivered with less impact on response standards than anticipated while the financial savings of £1.18m exceeded the predicted £1.12m saving.

Ensure crews have full access to operational risk information

This project saw the implementation of a new system to gather and quality-assure the risk information that is available to operational crews at an incident. All existing information on Nottinghamshire buildings and sites that present the highest risk to firefighters was reviewed and transferred to the new system. This is now regularly reviewed and updated for use during any incident.

Strengthen the sustainability of our on-call system

On-call firefighters provide a vital part of our operational response model. The ongoing recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters is a key challenge for us and other fire and rescue services. The purpose of this strategic action was to explore options to improve the way we support this aspect of our staffing model. This included reviewing the current on-call contracts and exploring alternatives. Trials resulting from this action are

ongoing and will continue into 2022.

Gather information on high-risk buildings

This strategic action reviewed our programme for identifying high-risk, non-domestic properties to ensure we protect people from the risk of fire. We tested our methodology for identifying these high-risk premises and we have made sure that the appropriate processes are in place for effective audits and inspections.

Review our Prevention and Protection departments and develop our evaluation framework

This strategic action involved continued development of our evaluation framework so we can review the effectiveness of our Prevention and Protection activities. New reporting and governance structures were introduced to ensure the effectiveness of our work and improve delivery through the evaluation of our activities.

Respond to recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry

We have continued to address the recommendations by working closely with the NFCC's Building Safety team and other key stakeholders including the city and county councils. Significant progress has been made on training, the information we hold about buildings and the supply of additional equipment for our crews over the past year. We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that residents in high-rise buildings within our communities remain safe.

Support those in greatest need. Continue to assess and improve our ways of working to ensure our resources are targeted at those most at risk and our interventions are effective

This included the introduction of a 'high-risk review group' to evaluate these interventions and external validation by Nottingham Trent University of how we identify those most at risk.

Improve the corporate governance planning cycle

The aim of this action was to support a corporate planning cycle and the development of strategic corporate documents. This action will result in the implementation of our next Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025.

Develop the Performance Management Framework

This is to improve how we monitor and evaluate our productivity and effectiveness. During 2020 / 2021, we introduced a performance dashboard, which has given us the ability to view current performance data across the Service. This action will be used to drive future decision-making and support us in operational resourcing. This two-year strategic action is now complete.

Further develop technological solutions to help drive effectiveness

This strategic action focused on the service's technology. Emphasis was placed on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of our staff by updating our mobile working capability; enhancing our training; improving our recording methods and data management practices; enhancing scrutiny and driving continuous improvement.

Alignment of all information management processes to ISO27001 (a cyber security standard)

We have made progress in introducing a management system which meets this international standard and it will identify and reduce ICT security risks. Additional Policies, Procedures and processes have been introduced following a self-audit of this area. This will become a 'business as usual' activity with training and continuous assessment. We expect to be recertified to the Cyber Essentials Plus Government standard by July 2021.

Collaborate to provide a better service: joint headquarters collaboration programme

This is the largest collaboration project to date between our Service and the police. We will move from our current headquarters at Bestwood Lodge to a new shared facility at the current Nottinghamshire Police HQ at Sherwood Lodge. During 2020 / 2021, work started on the new building and staff will move to the site between later this year and May 2022. This is a three-year strategic action which is on track for completion in 2022.



Figure 6 - Aerial view of the joint Nottinghamshire Police and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service HQ

Looking after your Service: develop and launch a new People Strategy

Our People Strategy is key to the delivery of our Strategic Plan, setting out how the Service will address and prioritise workforce issues to meet our aims and objectives. The Strategy explains how we will recruit, develop and support our staff to be confident and competent in their roles and how we will improve the diversity of our organisation. It also incorporates our Workforce Plan.

Enhance positive engagement to recruit a more diverse workforce and promote better understanding and links to our local communities

We have undertaken positive action as part of our wholtime and on-call firefighter recruitment campaigns to make sure that we are able to recruit more people from under-represented backgrounds.

Further develop and embed our Service Values to create an inclusive and supportive workplace for all our employees

It is important that our people understand what is expected of them and we have strived to make sure that every member of staff is clear on these objectives. Our Behavioural Framework is embedding our values – working as one team, being professional, being open to change and respecting others. In our 2020 staff survey, 96% of respondents said they are aware of our values and understand them.



Figure 7 - Two firefighters on a training exercise at Trent Bridge cricket ground

Preventing incidents and protecting you



Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Transport premises

Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Theatres, cinemas and sports grounds

Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Educational premises

Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Healthcare premises

Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Open air events and venues

Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Animal premises and stables

Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Large places of assembly

Prevention

We explain in our Strategic Plan how we are going to make our communities safer through our prevention activities.

We are working closer than ever before with our colleagues in other agencies to support early intervention for those most vulnerable in our county.

Our targeted Safe and Well visits offer advice on factors which increase vulnerability to fire and injury. This includes advice on stopping smoking, alcohol addiction, preventing falls, keeping warm in winter and general fire safety.

We monitor the effectiveness of our interventions and are able to refine the work we do as we aim to make every contact count.

Our intelligence-led profile, CHARLIE-P, identifies the main factors that could increase a person's risk to a fire occurring in their home. This stands for Care and cooking needs; Hoarding and mental health issues; Alcohol and medication; Reduced mobility; Living alone; Inappropriate smoking; Elderly and electrical and Previous signs of fire.

We use this profile to help improve the way partners notify us of people who may be at risk and to identify homes where we should target our Safe and Well visits.



Figure 8 - Firefighter giving a safety presentation

Over 2020 / 2021:

- We conducted 5,888 Safe and Well interventions – a mix of both physical visits for those most at risk and virtual sessions for others
- 53% of our Safe and Well interventions were delivered to people over 65 and 48% were delivered to people who considered themselves to be disabled
- We delivered 150 fire, road or water safety initiatives
- We supported 92 national safety campaigns
- We continued to deliver our Firesetter programme and conducted 69 interventions with young people who had shown an interest in setting or playing with fire



If you think you, or someone you know, is at risk from a fire in the home, please contact us on [0115 838 8100](tel:01158388100)

The pandemic restrictions presented challenges for how we traditionally deliver our prevention activities.

Using the CHARLIE-P matrix and telephone triage, we prioritised physical Safe and Well visits for those at a high risk of a fire occurring in their home and provided virtual support to those at a lower risk.

The pandemic also limited the other prevention activities that could be safely conducted by our crews, so we prioritised those with the potential to have the biggest impact in reducing fire, water or road related incidents.

While our physical prevention activity has been limited, we have been able to use virtual safety education.

During 2020 / 2021, we supported numerous local campaigns alongside our partners, as well as 92 national safety campaigns.

The Firesetter programme has continued to provide valuable interventions and education for young people who have been referred to us.



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Do you know a **CHARLIE**?



Statistics show that certain people **ARE** known to be more at risk from fire in the home. **Do you recognise this person?**

Care and support needs
Hoarding and mental health issues
Alcohol and medication
Reduced mobility
Lives alone
Inappropriate smoking
Elderly – 65+

If you know somebody who displays one or more of these characteristics get in touch today – you could save their life.

You can contact us, to organise a **FREE** Safe & Well Check via **0800 022 3235**. Alternatively, visit our website **www.notts-fire.gov.uk** to make a referral.

Our Joint Cadets scheme has continued to provide a programme for young people with an interest in the fire and rescue service or the police. We currently have 16 cadets taking part in a two-year pilot course.

We have improved the way we evaluate and quality-assure our prevention activities to make sure they are delivering the expected benefits. For example, during 2020 / 2021, we introduced a high-risk review group to review and follow up Safe and Well visits to particularly vulnerable people.

We have continued to work closely with a wide range of partners and community organisations to identify those most at risk and keep them safe. We continue to play an active role in the Nottinghamshire Road Safety Partnership, Water Safety Partnership and Safeguarding Boards.

Many of our staff within the Prevention department have also undertaken additional roles over the past year to support our response to the pandemic.

They were instrumental in introducing a signposting and befriending scheme; they contacted more than 3,500 vulnerable people with offers of support and a number of staff completed secondments with East Midlands Ambulance Service and Nottinghamshire's testing and vaccination programmes.



Protection

Our Protection department is responsible for auditing premises and enforcing fire safety legislation.

It works with businesses, landlords and those responsible for public buildings or other non-domestic properties to make sure they comply with safety regulations.

The team carries out inspections, gives advice and, where necessary, serves enforcement notices to make sure buildings are as safe as they should be.

This year has seen a thorough review of the risk-based inspection programme to make better use of our resources, according to the levels of risk.

The Protection department has continued to fulfil its statutory duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order and as part of building control processes.

During 2020 / 2021, the department completed:

- 336 full fire safety audits and 510 remote desktop audits
- 651 building consultations
- 377 specific inspections
- 263 licensing consultations
- 6 prohibition notices
- 7 enforcement notices
- 114 follow-up inspections

During the same period, we attended:

- 14% fewer non-domestic false alarms than we did in 2019 / 2020
- 37% fewer lift rescues than we did in 2019 / 2020



Work has continued to improve fire safety standards across the county in non-domestic premises with regulators including Building Control, Environmental Health, the Health and Safety Executive, Nottinghamshire Police, the Care Quality Commission, Ofsted and the Food Standards Agency.

As part of our statutory duties to support businesses our Business Education Advocates, using various platforms, engage with local businesses to provide guidance, support and advice on fire safety matters.

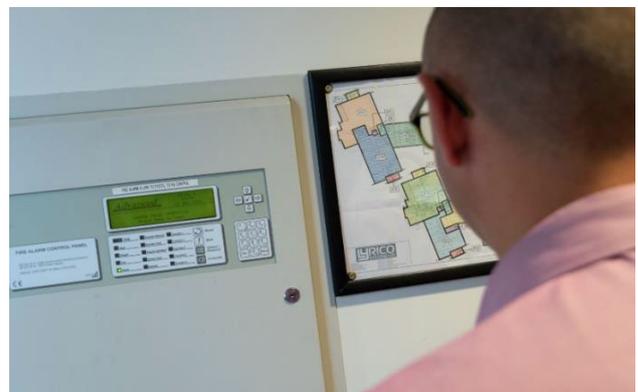
We have continued to provide advice to companies who have business premises within more than one fire and rescue service area through the Primary Authority Scheme.

We have participated in the building consultation processes of major construction projects across Nottinghamshire. These include the redevelopment of office premises in the city and the Amazon distribution centre near Mansfield. We were also involved in consultations at the design stage of the HS2 rail project.

Throughout 2020 / 2021, we worked hard to increase our capacity to inspect non-domestic properties under the Regulatory

Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO).

We have developed a fire auditors' qualification aligned to the National Fire Chiefs Council competency framework. This has been delivered to all supervisory managers of operational crews who will be warranted to inspect premises upon completion of the qualification. This will allow business safety checks to be conducted by operational crews, who will inspect low-risk premises.



We continue to work closely with the NFCC's Building Safety Team, following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017.

Since August 2019, we have been working to make our multi-occupancy residential buildings safer as part of our partnership with Nottingham City Council.

Our Joint Audit and Inspection Team have used each Authority's statutory powers to inspect and assure safety standards across entire premises.

During the pandemic, we placed greater focus on high-rise residential buildings – maximising our capacity to safely inspect these buildings and we worked with partners to address any issues.

We continued to work closely with local authority Safer Housing teams and Building Control to improve the standards of several high-risk premises in Nottingham.

We work collaboratively with Nottingham City Homes, providing advice and guidance on the retrofitting of sprinkler systems. These are now being fitted in all Nottingham City Homes high-rise blocks.

We continue to develop skills and formal qualifications within our teams so we can meet the challenges of the future. This

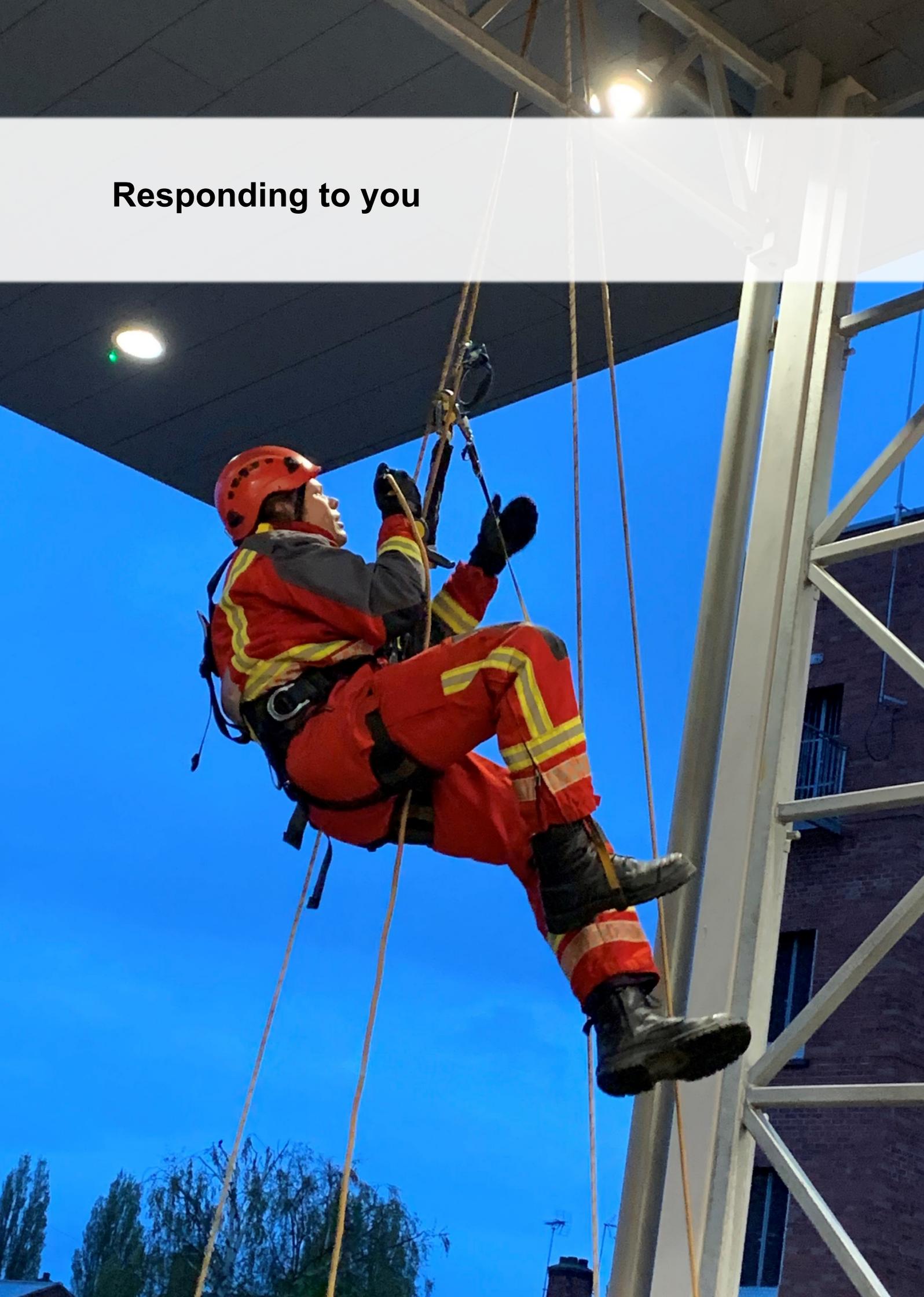
includes training two fire safety engineers and undertaking specific courses related to cladding and safety in high-rise premises.

We have continued to focus on reducing attendances at false alarms, particularly at businesses and industries, through working with owners and changing the ways we work. We have also continued to focus on improving safety in non-domestic premises by working with business owners to improve standards.

We have upheld our statutory function as regulator of fire safety standards and have issued six prohibition notices to premises where safety standards were unacceptable.



Responding to you



Response

You continue to be served by 30 fire engines and a range of specialised vehicles at 24 fire stations across our county. Our stations are made up of:

- Eight wholetime stations
- Four wholetime and on-call stations (two with a mixed crewing model)
- 12 on-call stations

The average time for a crew to attend an emergency, from the time it was mobilised by our Joint Control, was seven minutes and 50 seconds. This is within the eight-minute target in our Strategic Plan and an improvement of five seconds on 2019 / 2020.

Over 2020 / 2021:

- We attended 7% fewer emergency incidents than in 2019 / 2020
- We rescued 1,277 people from either buildings, vehicles, water, confined spaces or heights. In 2019 / 2020 this figure was 1,341
- There were 2,940 fires – a reduction of 5% on 2019 / 2020
- We attended 465 road traffic collisions – a decrease of 17% on 2019 / 2020
- We responded to 1,759 special service calls – a reduction of 13% on 2019 / 2020. Such calls include assisting East Midlands Ambulance Service and responding to flooding
- Our on-call fire engine availability averaged 88.8%, exceeding our target of 85%



During 2020 / 2021, we have played a critical role in supporting our communities as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic. Operational crews have served their communities by keeping in touch with the most vulnerable residents, delivering medication, food parcels and providing general wellbeing support.

We have also worked to further embed performance management into our daily decision-making and we continue to develop systems and processes to drive continuous improvement.



Figure 9 - Training exercise using new smoke hoods to assist rescuing people trapped in fires

Grenfell Tower Inquiry

We recognise the importance of learning from the tragedy that occurred at Grenfell Tower.

An additional post was resourced within the Service to focus on, and ensure that the learning from, the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report and other national incidents is implemented here in Nottinghamshire. This is to make sure we can respond effectively and efficiently to fires in tall buildings.

Additional training and equipment has been sourced to make sure firefighters have the skills and equipment needed to ensure their safety during complex incidents in tall buildings.

We continue to work with all UK fire and rescue services to develop working practices in response to Grenfell. We work particularly closely with regional partners so we are prepared for any major incidents.

Equipment

Attending a wide range of emergencies requires the right equipment so our firefighters can respond safely and effectively. During 2020 / 2021, we updated some of our equipment. This includes:

- Introducing smoke hoods for rescues from smoke-filled buildings – a recommendation from the Grenfell Inquiry and these have already been used to rescue people from smoke-filled buildings
- Upgrading firefighting hose reels from 19mm to 22mm to provide more firefighting water
- Starting an upgrade of CCTV on fire engines to keep our crews safe and help gather evidence for fire investigations
- Replacing hose inflation kits for incidents that require rescues from water

Operational Training

Despite COVID-19 impacting significantly on our planned training, we made sure that all operational competency training took place. Innovation and the use of technology supported the delivery of training via webinars and e-learning. Face-to-face practical training continued in secure environments.

The Service has continued to welcome on-call trainees to its training school.

Practical training exercises were disrupted due to social distancing requirements and the availability of suitable venues for training, however learning and training continued through desktop exercises and virtual simulations.

The Operational Training team has been expanded to include digital learning specialists from elsewhere in the Service. This allows us to make best use of the available technology to deliver packages for all staff.



Operational Preparedness

In 2020, we implemented a new system to manage site-specific risk information – essential information that helps crews understand the risks they may face at premises throughout the county. Our processes have been updated to make sure that our crews can keep this information up to date.

The pandemic has thoroughly tested our business continuity capability. We have used the learning from this to update and improve our Degradation and Business Continuity Plans.

Operational monitoring continued to ensure that learning from incidents was captured and shared across the Service and the wider sector.

We also continued to work as part of the East Midlands Regional Collaboration to implement National Operational Guidance. Throughout the year, 130 training packages were created for crews so they could implement National Operational Guidance effectively.

On-call

We have worked hard over the past year to further develop the sustainability of the on-call workforce, including the ongoing recruitment and training of additional employees.

We have examined options to vary the terms and conditions of the on-call role to broaden its appeal to wider sections of the community.

These plans will be piloted later this year at two stations in the county.

**NEED
MORE?**

**OPPORTUNITY
BELONGING
COMMUNITY**

**ON-CALL
FIREFIGHTERS**

For more information visit
www.notts-fire.gov.uk/nifs-careers
www.oncallfire.uk
email: SoOC@notts-fire.gov.uk
tel FR: 0115 838 8247

 **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities



Figure 10 - Recent On-call recruitment leaflet

Fire Investigation

During 2020 / 2021, our specialist fire investigators investigated 116 serious fires across the county.

Our fire investigators work alongside the police and forensic experts to collect and examine evidence and determine the likely origin and cause of a fire. We provide expert opinion to the coroner, police and insurance companies and advise property owners on future fire safety measures.

Our team is continuing to strengthen relationships with Nottinghamshire Police by conducting Fire Investigation awareness training for CID officers and working towards co-locating with Crime Scene Investigation at the new joint HQ.

This year has seen a big push to achieve excellence and demonstrate professionalism by beginning to work towards the ISO17020 standard and align to the UK's Fire Investigation Professional Body (UK-AFI).



Figure 11 - Rear doors of the Fire Investigation van



Figure 12 - Joint fire investigation with Nottinghamshire Police following a car fire

Looking after our people



People

Our people are at the heart of what we do, and ensuring their wellbeing, positive engagement and positive morale strengthens the service that we provide to you.

This has been a challenging year but our staff have worked incredibly hard to maintain our services and provide additional support to county communities.

We have seen 50 volunteers working with partners to provide essential support. This has included transporting patients for the NHS; delivering prescriptions and food parcels to our most vulnerable residents; setting up 13 vaccinations centres and training volunteers; providing vaccinators for vaccination centres; befriending phone calls and offering online and telephone advice on fire prevention.

Throughout the pandemic our staff continued to deliver the emergency response that the residents of Nottinghamshire quite rightly expect. It has truly been a huge team effort.

Over 2020 / 2021:

We employed 858 people, compared to 821 in 2019 /2020. This consists of:

- 681 staff in operational roles, compared to 674 in 2019 / 2020. This is due to increases to our on-call establishment
- 177 staff in support roles, compared to 147 in 2019 / 2020
- Overall our recruitment consisted of 17 wholetime firefighters, 20 on-call firefighters and 26 support staff
- 29 accidents were reported in the workplace, compared with 41 in 2019 / 2020 – a reduction of 29%
- 33 near misses were reported, compared to 70 in 2019 /2020 – a reduction of 53%
- Sickness absence decreased by 24% over the year
- All operational staff are required to undertake an annual fitness test with 99.6% passing this requirement

We have been able to use technology to work away from the workplace, in line with government guidance.

We adapted our working practices to provide a full support service to our staff and have been able to continue all of our core business functions.

This has meant that recruitment, training, health and safety and employee wellbeing support have been delivered, albeit in a slightly different way.

Our [People Strategy](#) sets out our key priorities for 2020 / 2022 and our workforce planning makes sure that we have the optimum number of employees with the necessary skills to deliver on our Service objectives, both now and in the future.

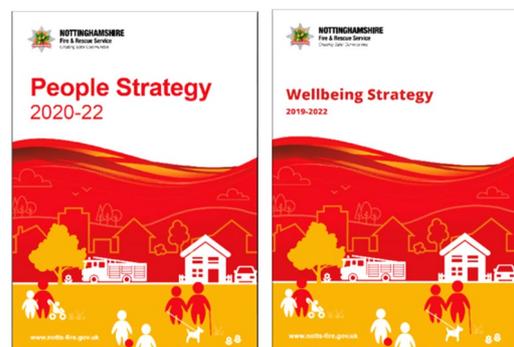
We have recruited to 63 roles during 2020 / 2021 and undertaken a major recruitment campaign to select apprentice firefighters. This resulted in 25 new recruits who will start training this year so that we can replace those firefighters who will be retiring. Twenty new on-call firefighters also started their employment with us during 2020.

As part of our aim to be a representative employer, we undertook positive action as part of our firefighter recruitment campaign to encourage more

women and those from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, who are all currently under-represented in our workforce, to join us. A number of people who participated in positive action were successful.

We have continued to deliver operational training at our Service Development Centre and Incident Command Suite and have adapted some courses to deliver them online or through e-learning, so that we can continue to deliver accessible training for our staff. We have also launched a new Leadership Framework.

A focus during the last year has been the wellbeing of our staff. Our Occupational Health team has provided online fitness and mental health support sessions in addition to normal clinical and fitness appointments. Our [Wellbeing Strategy](#) can be found on our website.



Health and Safety

The Health and Safety team ensured that all of our sites have been COVID-secure.

The additional activities we have undertaken to support partners and communities through COVID-19 have been risk-assessed in conjunction with employee representatives.

Routine work, including audits and proactive management and investigation of accidents, near misses and vehicle collisions, continued throughout the year.

We retendered our insurance contract, which commenced on 1 April, and were able to secure a £50,000 saving on the previous contract due to improved risk management arrangements.



Figure 13 - Our staff have helped to deliver thousands of COVID vaccinations between them

Our Values



Being open to change and understanding the need to improve

This means we open ourselves up to new ideas and become a more sustainable and stable organisation, ready for the future.



Being professional in all that we do by being the best we can be

This is done by behaving with integrity and taking personal responsibility for our behaviour and decisions.



Valuing and respecting others

By treating our staff, community and our service users with respect and consideration, we become a more customer-focused and inclusive organisation.



Working as one team

To create safer communities.

Staff survey

We undertook an employee survey during 2020, which 62% of staff completed. It provided some really positive feedback as well as identifying some areas where we could improve.

It showed that the majority of our staff enjoy coming to work, feel trusted to do their jobs and have high morale.

77% of staff would recommend our Service as a great place to work. This is important in the context of wellbeing and continued good health.

A priority for our Service is to ensure inclusive delivery of our activities and inclusive workplaces. It is our aim to create a truly inclusive workplace, where people are valued for who they are and what they contribute. Our Behavioural Framework supports the embedding of our values.

Inclusion

Inclusion also extends to our service delivery and understanding of our diverse communities, their needs and expectations.

This applies to established communities and those who may be new to the county, to ensure that they understand how to stay safe from fire and other risks.

Educating our workforce about different communities is an essential part of establishing inclusion at the core of our service delivery. Building on this understanding will be a priority for us over the next year.



Figure 14 - Service outreach vehicle often used at community events

Delivering an efficient Service



Governance

Various governance bodies and systems are required to deliver an efficient fire and rescue service to our communities.

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

This is often referred to as the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) and is responsible for ensuring the Service has the people, equipment and training needed to carry out its duties in relation to fire prevention; fire safety; firefighting and rescue; road traffic collision extrication and rescue and other emergency rescue activities such as responding to flooding or terrorism.

The authority consists of 18 elected councillors from Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. There are six committees that report to the Fire Authority. These are:

- Appointments
- Community Safety
- Finance and Resources
- Human Resources
- Personnel
- Policy and Strategy

Collectively these committees and the authority make decisions on key matters such as policy, strategy and budget.

Meetings of the CFA and its committees are open to the public. Further information can be found on the city council's website.

Policy and Strategy Committee

Once the extent of the pandemic was understood, the CFA's Policy and Strategy Committee was utilised to streamline decision-making during the fast-paced, early phases of the pandemic. Group Leader's meetings with the Chief Fire Officer ensured that members were kept fully informed and briefed on key Service developments.

This enabled information-based decision making to continue in a rapidly changing environment. Full Fire Authority governance was reintroduced as soon as practicable and the authority utilised emergency legislation to hold meetings online and broadcast them through YouTube to ensure continuing transparency for communities.

Strategic Leadership Team

Under the direction of the Chief Fire Officer, the Strategic Leadership Team is responsible for implementing the strategy and policy decisions taken by the CFA.

The team meets weekly to maintain collective understanding of priorities, discuss emerging issues and determine whether further formal reports or business cases are required for consideration.

Programme and Performance Board

The Programme and Performance Board has monthly meetings chaired by the Chief Fire Officer. These focus on the progress being made against the strategic objectives set by the CFA.

It scrutinises performance reports and key performance indicators from all areas of the Service and oversees significant corporate projects.

Operational Learning Board

This board meets every two months to ensure that we can effectively learn from the operational incidents and exercises that have taken place.

This board also considers learning that has come from other fire and rescue services to ensure an efficient, safe and effective operational response.

Service Delivery Evaluation and Assurance Group

This group meets quarterly to oversee the performance of our Prevention, Protection and Response departments.

Risk and performance highlights are identified, with the aim of addressing any areas of concern and celebrating and learning from good performance.

Information Governance

We fully support Freedom of Information and transparency.

Our data protection officer supports and maintains our data protection responsibilities and we continue to train all employees in this.

Cybersecurity

Cyberattacks are a constant threat to organisations and especially those in the public sector.

We continue to monitor and update our practices to make sure we are well placed to deal with current and future risks.

Over the past year, we have thwarted over 260,000 total threats. This includes spam, malware and viruses.

Business Continuity Management

COVID-19 enabled us to test and refine our business continuity management arrangements throughout 2020 and 2021.

In addition to responding to the pandemic, we completed a full review of our business continuity plans and structures and established a new information management system and new governance systems.

These arrangements ensured that we were able to respond effectively to the pandemic. We also maintained a strategic debrief and lessons learnt log to ensure that our learning can be used to improve the response to business continuity events in the future.



Financial Performance

Under the Local Government Act 1999, fire and rescue services are responsible for ensuring that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

We provide financial assurance through the publication of an [Annual Statement of Accounts](#). This is a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the accounts are prepared following the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. The financial statements are subject to review by independent auditors.

Our appointed external auditor is Ernst Young LLP. The auditors are responsible for two key areas:

- Financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement). This provides an opinion on our accounts
- Use of resources – concluding on the arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (the value for money conclusion)

Internal audit forms part of the wider system of internal control which deals entirely with the Service's exposure to financial, and to some extent, non-financial risk.

Our internal audit for 2019 / 2020 was conducted by Nottinghamshire County Council and reported to the Finance and Resources Committee of the Fire Authority.

This allowed members to see the work of the internal audit and the contribution that it makes to the overall system of internal control.



2020 / 21 Financial budget

The 2020 / 2021 budget was set at £45.165m. We underspent by £1.6m during this year. This was due to additional COVID-19 and Grenfell grants received during the year.

£480,000 of this has been carried forward to 2021 / 2022. In addition to this, there was a significant underspend on wholetime pay as a wholetime training course was delayed early in 2020, meaning vacancy levels were higher than expected.

Overtime was also reduced to prevent the mixing of crews during lockdown, causing further underspend.

Capital expenditure for the year totalled £3.249m.

£1.6m was spent on the new joint HQ, £769,000 was spent on IT equipment and £499,000 was spent on operational equipment.

Reserves at the end of March 2021 were £10.798m.

Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement publicly explains how we manage our governance and internal control measures.

It is a transparent account of how we ensure our financial management system is adequate and effective. It also ensures a sound system of internal control, assuring the utmost integrity in all of our work.

The Fire Authority also has a [Code of Corporate Governance](#) in which it reaffirms its duties and responsibilities.

In this document officers support each of the code's principles with documentation or existing practices, demonstrating how the Fire Authority complies with the principles that make up the code.

We recognise the importance of transparency over how public money is spent.

[The Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#) has been used as the foundation for organisational transparency. In deciding what information we should make available, as a starting point we have used the recommended data sets as defined by this code.

Using our resources effectively

It is important that we use our resources as effectively as possible. During 2020 / 2021, in responding to the challenges of the pandemic, we adapted to use our resources in a variety of ways.

Sharing resources is improving our effectiveness and efficiency and delivering financial savings.

Collaboration is a statutory requirement for the Service and has helped us provide benefits for our communities during these challenging times.

Maintaining our buildings and vehicles is also essential to make sure they remain fit for purpose and cost-effective.

We are continuing to rebuild our estate by delivering modern, energy-efficient buildings that provide operational response bases and community hubs.

In 2020 / 2021:

- We completed collaboration projects at Highfields and West Bridgford stations which saw co-location with Nottinghamshire Police
- Work continued on the construction of the joint Police and Fire Service HQ at Sherwood Lodge
- Design and procurement of the new Worksop Station was completed
- Internal refurbishment works were carried out at Eastwood, Worksop and Stockhill stations
- A new multi-activity contract to provide maintenance to all our premises was awarded
- We upgraded our facilities management system



During 2020 / 2021, our Procurement and Resources team maintained full service operations, while responding to new challenges resulting from the pandemic

This included:

- Procuring additional personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Meeting increased demand for sanitising and cleaning products
- Amending cleaning contracts
- Meeting increased laundry requirements for new firefighting PPE
- Making sure our buildings remained COVID-secure

Projects delivered by our Engineering team during the same period included:

- Replacing 16 vehicles in our fleet
- New software to improve fire hydrant maintenance and inspection
- A new Environmental Protection Unit in collaboration with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Environment Agency
- The upgrade of our asset management scanners
- Completion of the upgrade to our Command Support Unit
- Upgrading firefighting hose reels
- Replacement of hose inflation kit
- Starting the upgrade of CCTV on fire engines
- Procuring smoke hoods in line with the Grenfell Fire Inquiry report



Service assurance and future improvement

In 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary took on the inspections of England's Fire and Rescue Services to become Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

In February 2019, we had our first inspection for a number of years and in June 2019, we received our inspection report.

HMICFRS rated our fire protection work and our national response as 'Good'.

Overall, our Service was found to 'require improvement' in these three areas:

- How effective a fire service is
- How efficient it is
- How well it looks after its people

In the report, HMICFRS identified 25 areas for improvement across the organisation.

We created an improvement plan covering each of these and progress is monitored each month at our Programme and Performance Board.

We also report our progress quarterly to Fire Authority committees to allow for further scrutiny.

This September we will welcome HMICFRS for our second independent inspection.



HMICFRS Action Plan

At the time of publication, we have completed 24 of the areas for improvement.

Progress has been made on the remaining action, which is expected to be complete by September 2021.

Future Improvement

The Fire Authority has agreed our [year three strategic actions](#).

These include a range of new actions around the themes of 'responding to you', 'preventing incidents and protecting you', 'delivering an efficient service' and 'looking after our people'.

While delivering on these key service ambitions, we will strive to restore all of our community-focused services and implement new ways of working as we emerge from the pandemic.

Strategic Assessment of Risk

We have commissioned an external specialist consultant to undertake a detailed analysis of risk across the city and county, which will feed into a Strategic Assessment of Risk in 2021.

This analysis will help us allocate our resources to the foreseeable risks within our communities as part of our statutory duties and will be a core element of constructing our new Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan

We are in the process of producing our new Strategic Plan as part of our Integrated Risk Management Planning process.

The Strategic Plan will be published in April 2022 and will utilise the findings of the Strategic Assessment of Risk to determine the focus and activities of the Service for the next three years.

As part of this process, we are seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders from across our communities and will undertake a formal consultation on the draft plan later this year.

Assurance declaration

The Combined Fire Authority functions within the clearly defined statutory and policy framework.

The key documents setting this out are:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority is satisfied that it has met government expectations and responsibilities expected of fire and rescue services with regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

It is satisfied that it has shown due regard for public money and that it was properly accounted for and used efficiently and effectively.

It has adhered to the commitments set out in the IRMP for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.



Councillor Michael Payne
Chair of the Fire Authority



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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