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Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Monday 17 November 2025

10:00

Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford

The meeting will be webcast live and archived for 12 months. It can be viewed at the following link: <https://staffordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Kate Loader
County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
7 November 2025

Agenda

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of interest**
3. **Minutes of the Panel meeting and Confirmation Hearing both held on 22 September 2025** (Pages 5 - 16)
4. **Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public** (Pages 17 - 24)

Questions to the Commissioner are invited from members of the public who live or work in Staffordshire. Notice of questions must be received by no later than three clear working days before the Panel meeting. More information on where and how to submit a question can be found at <https://bit.ly/34arVDw>

5. **Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)**

The following decisions have been published on the Commissioners website since the last meeting:

SCF/D/202526/001 – Purchase of Fire Appliances 2025/26 and 2026/27 [SCF-D-202526-001.pdf](#)



SCF/D/202526/002 - Service Principal Officer
Team Pay Review

[SCF-D-202526-002.pdf](#)

6. **MTFS Update Police** (Pages 25 - 38)
7. **MTFS Update - Fire** (Pages 39 - 52)
8. **Fire Safety Plan update** (Pages 53 - 74)
9. **Statement of Assurance 2024/25** (Pages 75 - 118)
10. **Review of Panels Procedures to Deal with Complaints Against the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and/or the Deputy Police Fire and Crime Commissioner** (Pages 119 - 126)
11. **Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members**
12. **Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme** (Pages 127 - 130)
13. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:

"That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of Local Government Act 1972 indicated below".

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

Membership	
Charlotte Atkins (Vice-Chairperson) Adrian Bowen Richard Cox (Chairperson) Carol Dean	Majid Khan Zdzislaw Krupski Angela Loughran Vince Merrick Anthony Screen



Chris Elliott Gill Heesom	David Williams
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Notes for Members of the Press and Public

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If you have privacy concerns about the webcast or do not wish to have your image captured, then please contact the Member and Democratic Services officer named at the top right of the agenda.

Recording by Press and Public

Recording (including by the use of social media) by the Press and Public is permitted from the public seating area provided it does not, in the opinion of the Chair, disrupt the meeting.

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel meeting held on Monday 22 September 2025

Present: Richard Cox (Chairperson)

Attendance	
Charlotte Atkins (Vice-Chairperson) Adrian Bowen Carol Dean Chris Elliott	Angela Loughran Anthony Screen David Williams

Also in attendance: Ben Adams, David Evans and Louise Clayton

Apologies: Gill Heesom, Majid Khan, Zdzislaw Krupski and Vince Merrick

13. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made at the meeting.

14. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2025

Resolved: That the minutes of the Panel meeting held on 28 July 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair.

The Action sheet attached to the minutes was noted. The Commissioner reminded the Panel that the information they had asked for on the Microsoft contract was in the action sheet. With reference to the question asked on stab vests – these were fitted to the individual officer and only if they were damaged or needed repair were officers allocated pool vests, officers were not expected to share. Burslem Police station heating system was now repaired.

15. Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public

The Panel considered the questions ask by members of the public.

1. Mrs Mallender had asked two questions relating to Police dealings with a company called Elbit. The questions and the Commissioners response had been received before the publication of the agenda and were therefore attached to the agenda pack.
2. Mr Bradbury had submitted 2 questions within the permitted 3 working day requirement. They were:

- a) Why are Staffordshire Police Force spending large amounts of money blocking/refusing free speech.

The Commissioner asked for more information before he could reply to this. Mr Bradbury agreed to provide this and the question was referred to the next meeting to be answered in public.

- b) Why did the Commissioner take so long removing the Chief Constable.

The Commissioner confirmed that he had been happy with the Chief Constables performance and had no concerns when extending his contract. There was a separate report on the agenda concerning his suspension.

- 3. Brocton Parish Council had submitted 2 questions within the permitted 3 working day requirement - Councillor Bates attended the meeting to ask the questions.

- a) Brocton crossroads - at a meeting with SCC Highways Officers, on 15.7.25, it was brought to the attention of the Parish Council, that the Police only log incidents where there has been a personal injury claim, is this correct? If yes, please explain why this is the case. The number of accidents/incidents at the crossroads is of significant concern to the residents of Brocton and if this method of recording by the Police is correct, then the true picture of the number of accidents/incidents will never be known by the Police, which is completely unacceptable. The Parish Council submitted a petition to SCC in 2024, signed by over 400 individuals, calling for safety improvements at the crossroads. We have the support of our County Cllr and were shocked to hear of this method of recording accidents by the Police and want to formally request this is changed, so all accidents, however minor, are logged. Can this be agreed?

The Commissioner responded saying that there was a reporting obligation if injury or harm had been sustained. However, not all accidents were reported to the police and therefore through a national recording body. There could be delays in the information coming to the local police. More information on how reports were logged would be provided.

- b) Reporting of deer injuries/fatalities. It is our understanding that the way to report deer injuries/fatalities is via 101. Is this correct? If yes, then those taking calls need to be informed about the correct process to follow, as it has been raised with us that the system is not working effectively and people are confused. A clear process needs to be communicated to all those involved in supporting on this matter - this

needs to be shared with the Parish Council, so that we can disseminate this information throughout our Parish, so that are residents are very clear of the correct process to follow. The Ranger Service also need to be advised of the correct process to follow. This will clear up the current confusion that exists and ensures the distressed deer are attended to as quickly as possible.

The Commissioner responded and more information would be provided after the meeting. The Ranger service would be the appropriate service to report issues if animals were injured. Their contact number would be promoted by the Commissioner when possible.

Resolved:

- a) That the questions asked, and the Commissioners responses be noted.
- b) That the questions received after the agenda was published would be added to the panels website / meeting agenda for information.

16. Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)

A link to the decisions published by the Commissioner since the last Panel meeting was provided on the agenda.

Resolved: That the decisions be noted.

17. Police and Crime Plan Update

The Commissioner provided a summary of the report highlighting the main progress since 1 April 2025 in delivering the Police and Crime Plan for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

It was reported that through the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee (paragraph 4.9 of the report) it was hoped that there would be a further 53 Police Officers employed. The Commissioner reported that he was in discussions nationally and hoped that local discretion could be used to influence the requirements rather than national direction. He felt that locally there was a good mix of PCSO's and Specials and that any increase in personnel should be Police Officers.

During the wide ranging debate, the Committee made the following comments and noted the responses to questions:

- Supporting Victims/ Stalking: There seemed to be a disparity between the number of incidents reported and the number of protection orders issued. An update was also requested on the 'Stalking action plan' published in 2023. The Commissioner reported that the service was currently looking at domestic abuse and stalking and the possibility of specialist officers and support packages for victims. It

was suggested that there may be a lack of support for victims as they were not taking part in risk assessments. Figures suggested at the meeting would be provided to the Commissioner. The Commissioner felt that the service was an area for continuous focus and development. The benefit of some national programmes such as 'Drive' was being investigated.

- The results to the Commissioners consultation on priorities could be found on the Commissioners website along with the performance meeting information which contained detail on the performance against priorities. The Commissioner felt that there was also constant reassessment of the priorities through regular surveys.
- Improving the rate of Guilty pleas at the first court hearing (paragraph 7.19) had been achieved through better quality of evidence shared in a more timely manner.
- Safer Roads – It was felt that in the past there had been a delay in receiving up to date data which had been recorded and passed to the national action database. The Commissioner reported that there had been significant progress in bringing the data up to date, but there had been delays. The priority was to reduce accidents, and the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership was looking data and from many sources not just accident or speeding data. Strategy development was taking place.
- Financial accountability – The level of detail on the Commissioners budgets, available on this website was discussed. It was reported that the MTFs update was in the Panels work programme for the next meeting in November and the detailed budget was shared with the Panel when they considered the precept setting in February each year.
- The process of public consultation and the preparation for large scale events such as demonstrations was discussed. The Commissioner informed the Panel that sometimes events happened very quickly and there wasn't any consultation with police, which reduced the ability to reassure the public. A review of the process of placing large numbers of people into local accommodation was requested. The Commissioner responded that this was not appropriate as the Police had no control over the placement or the time scales. Demonstrations and large events were a pressure on police resource both locally and nationally.

Resolved:

- a) That the update report be noted.
- b) That a report be considered at a future meeting on Stalking and Domestic Abuse and the work taking place locally.

18. Fire Safety Plan update

Due to the time restraints on the panel, it was agreed that the report should be deferred to the next meeting to enable a full debate.

Resolved: That the report be deferred to the next meeting of the Panel.

19. Review of Panels Policies and Procedures

At the Panel meeting held on 28 July 2025, it was proposed that there should be an independent review of the working of the panel. At that meeting, the Panel agreed that the Chair and Secretary would bring a report to the next panel with more information on the proposal of a review of the panels performance. Having considered the report, the Panel felt that a working group should be established to discuss the documents and suggested actions.

Resolved:

- a) That an all-panel membership working group be established to consider the reviewed terms of reference and operating processes.
- b) That the working group report their recommendations back to a public meeting for approval.

20. Chief Constable Suspension - information report

The Panel noted the information report

Resolved: That the report be noted.

21. Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members

No questions were asked at this part of the meeting.

22. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

The next scheduled meeting day was due to be held on 17 November 2025 at 10:00.

Resolved: That the Work Programme be received.

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel meeting held on Monday 22 September 2025

Present: Richard Cox (Chairperson)

Attendance	
Charlotte Atkins (Vice-Chairperson) Adrian Bowen Chris Elliott	Angela Loughran Anthony Screen David Williams

Also in attendance: Ben Adams, David Evans and Sarah Wilkes.

Apologies: Carol Dean, Gill Heesom, Majid Khan, Zdzislaw Krupski and Vince Merrick

23. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

24. Consideration of proposed appointment to the post of Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer)

The Secretary to the Panel's report explained that the Panel was required to hold a Confirmation Hearing following receipt of formal notification by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner of his wish to appoint his preferred candidate for the post of Director of Finance Section 151 Officer.

The report explained that guidance on the role of the Panel, recommended that through questioning of the candidate they should consider the 'professional competence' and 'personal independence' of the individual. To assist, the Panel had been provided with the preferred candidates CV in advance of the meeting and a job description/person specification was attached to the agenda.

Presentation by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner

The Commissioner reported on the detailed and lengthy process followed by him to recruit a new Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Commissioners Office.

The Commissioner reported that Sarah Wilkes was his preferred candidate.

Presentation by and questions to Sarah Wilkes:

Sarah Wilkes briefly summarised her career, work experience and achievements to date.

The Panel questioned her on various issues including how her experience would address the challenges faced by the Commissioners office and the qualities needed to deliver change.

The Panel adjourned at 13:05 pm to consider their decision.

The Panel reconvened at 13:10 pm. The Commissioner and Sarah Wilkes were re-admitted to the meeting and informed of the Panel's decision.

Resolved : That the Staffordshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner be informed that this Panel recommends that he proceed with the appointment of Sarah Wilkes as the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer.

STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

NOTE: The following action or information was requested at a previous meeting(s). When an item has been completed it will be reported to the Panel and then taken off the list.

Meeting / Agenda Item	Action Required	By Whom	Information requested/action taken	Completed or Target date
22 September 2025 – minute 15 – Public questions	The Commissioner asked for more information before he could reply to this question. Mr Bradbury agreed to provide this and the question was referred to the next meeting to be answered in public.	MP to discuss with Mr Bradbury	At the time of publishing the papers officers were unable to make contact.	
22 September 2025 – minute 15 – Public questions	A) Brocton Parish Council – A) Brocton Crossroads - More information on how reports were logged would be provided. B) Deer service - The Commissioner responded, more information would be provided c) questions and answers published on the panels website	PFCC PFCC MP	Emailed to members and published with agenda papers.	Complete
Police and Crime Plan update – Minute 17	Cllr Atkins - It was suggested that there may be a lack of support for victims as they were not taking part in risk assessments.	MP	Attached update	Complete

Police and Crime Plan update – Minute 17	That a report be considered at a future meeting on Stalking and Domestic Abuse and the work taking place locally.	MP	Added to the work programme	Complete
Police and Crime Plan update – Minute 17	The Commissioners consultation exercise was discussed		The results of the Commissioners consultation exercise was emailed to panel members for information	Complete
Fire Safety Plan – minute 18	That the report be deferred to the next meeting of the Panel.	MP	Added to the work programme	Complete
Review of Panels policy and procedure – minute 19	A working group be set up to consider the report in more detail	MP	Meeting held on 7, 13 and 27 October 2025	Continuing.

Police and Crime Plan – update minute 17

Stalking and Harassment

The Staffordshire Commissioner recognises the need for a dedicated localised stalking and harassment support service for victims. As a result, work is now in progress to understand local need through close liaison with Police colleagues. With this information, plans will be affected to commission a dedicated Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent service for victims affected by this type of criminality, during the next financial year 26-27.

Domestic Abuse

As was highlighted by Cllr Atkins at the last meeting, the Peel report originally highlighted the result from a Staffordshire Police audit which identified 38% of victims turned down the opportunity to complete a DA Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment and I can report that the refusal rate in October 2025 reduced to 24.89%.

These figures however need to be considered against a myriad of complex factors.

The DASH risk assessment completed on attendance at DA incidents is only one part of a wider risk assessment package that's undertaken following each DA incident. The reasons for an individual refusing to respond the risk assessment questions are varied and often personal and you should be reassured that officers then feed in a range of information about the incident to their local Harm Reduction Hub where safeguarding referrals are considered. Harm Reduction Hubs also conduct a secondary review of the case where any other knowledge about the parties to the incident is considered, alongside police systems research and consideration for referral of parties to partner organisations or MARAC.

Refusal numbers are regularly monitored by LPT Commanders and Harm Reduction Hub Sgts continue to provide training briefings to LPTs to focus on reducing refusal levels and to provide guidance on how to build confidence with victims to secure a completion of a DASH.

In terms of domestic abuse support provision, the pan Staffordshire commissioned New Era Domestic Abuse services provide a wealth of DA support for victims, and services for perpetrators of DA. Funded by the SCO in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the Victim Service and the voluntary Behaviour Change Support service each work with adults and children, families, communities, businesses and partner agencies consistently across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

New Era, supports those at all levels of risk, from standard through to high and individuals do not have to report to the police to access support, they can self-refer directly into the services. Once a DA service user reaches out to specialist DA services for support, they will also undergo a DASH risk assessment so that their level of risk and identification of the support they need can be best determined.

We continue to work with our partners to collectively and consistently raise awareness of domestic abuse, so that victims feel confident to reach out for support from Police and our DA specialists, whilst at the same time encouraging those perpetrating abuse to reach out and engage with one of the voluntary support programmes to help change their abusive behaviours. Greater levels of recorded DA means that more victims have the confidence to come forward and seek help.

**STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL –
17 November 2025**

**QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC TO THE POLICE, FIRE AND
CRIME COMMISSIONER**

Report of the Secretary

The Panel's Constitution provides for questions to the Commissioner from members of the public. Questioners can choose to either attend the meeting and ask the question themselves or have the question dealt with in written form and the reply forwarded to them.

K Loader
Secretary to the Panel

Contact Officers: Mandy Pattinson
Mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk

1. T Stocks

The question relates to a previous question which went to Panel in July 2025.

May I please ask the Commissioner for an update at the next meeting of the PFCP:

1. What progress has been made with the Strip Search Policy and crime recording that are referred to in the previous response? What other policies have been reviewed and/or amended as a result of the Supreme Court judgment?

2. Does Staffordshire Police recognise the vulnerability and concerns amongst members of the public (and especially women and girls) resulting from the Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 not being fully implemented by the force some five months after the judgment, or does it just recognise the "vulnerability and concerns amongst the transgender community" as stated in the previous response?

Previous response (July 2025):

"Commissioner Response: Following the Supreme Court judgment Staffordshire Police is reviewing and amending all affected policies. Staffordshire Police recognise the vulnerability and concerns amongst the transgender community since the Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010. As part of this change in legislation, they are reviewing a number of policies and processes to reflect the changes. This requires the force to seek legal advice and liaise with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to ensure policies are in line with national guidance. One of the areas Staffordshire Police have first focused on as a priority is updating their Strip Search Policy. This policy will be published shortly. Another priority area for this review is crime recording – this is still being looked at nationally. The interim advice from the Home Office, which Staffordshire Police are adhering to, is to continue recording sex as set out in line with the information on the individuals' birth certificate or gender recognition certificate. The Commissioner will bring an update to a future panel meeting."

2. Mr Bradbury

1. Why is the Staffordshire Police Force allowed to withhold the names of officers who have been found guilty of criminal offences and also given the option to resign or be sacked?

2. When officers are allowed to resign, do they still get their pension?

Police, Fire & Crime Panel – Public Question PFCP0037

Questions Posed:

1. What progress has been made with the Strip Search Policy and crime recording that are referred to in the previous response? What other policies have been reviewed and/or amended as a result of the Supreme Court judgment?
2. Does Staffordshire Police recognise the vulnerability and concerns amongst members of the public (and especially women and girls) resulting from the Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 not being fully implemented by the force some five months after the judgment, or does it just recognise the "vulnerability and concerns amongst the transgender community" as stated in the previous response?

Panel Member: Member of the Public Terance David Stock

Question Date: 3 October 2025

Commissioner Response:

Staffordshire Police has implemented a policy in line with national guidelines around the searching of transgender individuals and searching by transgender employees. The policy has been approved through force governance routes and been well socialised amongst officers and staff.

The force has engaged closely with Staff Networks ensuring their approach is compliant with the supreme court judgement and sensitive of the perspectives and wellbeing of officers and staff. Policies are reviewed regularly, to take account of new legislation, guidance and any learning and feedback, both locally and nationally.

The force has not received any feedback indicating that female officers or staff have felt uncomfortable or pressured to conduct searches against their wishes. The Staff network for women in policing have been engaged with throughout the policy implementation.

The Annual Data Return notice for 2025/26 includes 'ADR 153 Cross-Cutting Demographics Data Collection'. This specifies that sex should be recorded 'in line with information on the individual's birth certificate or gender recognition certificate.' We have had no update to the ADR requirement and the advice from the Home Office is to continue to adhere to ADR 153 pending the outcome of the national reviews into the implications of the Supreme Court ruling.



Contact Officer

Author:	Louise Clayon
Position:	Chief Executive
Date:	3 November 2025
PFCP meeting date	17 November 2025

Police, Fire & Crime Panel – Public Question PFCP0038

Questions Posed:

1. Why is the Staffordshire Police Force allowed to withhold the names of officers who have been found guilty of criminal offences and also given the option to resign or be sacked?
2. When officers are allowed to resign, do they still get their pension?

Panel Member: Member of the Public Mr Bradbury

Question Date: 5 November 2025

Commissioner Response:

1. The outcome of criminal cases are published by the court. Outside of court cases, where an officer's conduct is found to amount to misconduct or gross misconduct, the finding and the disciplinary action imposed are generally published by the force. This typically includes the officer's name, rank, force, and the reasons for the dismissal. Officers who are dismissed from the police service following a conduct hearing are placed on the College of Policing's "barred list". This list is publicly accessible and is used to prevent them from re-entering policing or related roles. Details remain on the public list for five years. In rare cases, the person chairing the misconduct hearing can dispense with the requirement to publish the name and report if there are specific circumstances, such as protecting the privacy and welfare of a third party such as a vulnerable victim or witness.
2. There is a legislative basis for police pension forfeiture: regulation K5 of the Police Pensions Regulations 1987. Regulation 55 of the 2006 Regulations and Chapter 5 of Part 13 of the 2015 Regulations allow for Police and Crime Commissioners to determine forfeiture, and the extent of the forfeiture of police officers in specific cases. The Regulations also detail circumstances where the PCC may apply, to the Home Secretary, for forfeiture of a police officer's pension from:
 - A regular police officer or former regular police officer;
 - A survivor of such a police officer; and
 - A pension credit member.

Forfeiture can only be applied in cases where there is a criminal conviction.

The PFCC may determine forfeiture, and the extent of forfeiture where a pension (whether they are eligible for an immediate or deferred pension) has been convicted of either:

- An offence of treason, or of offences under the Official Secrets Act 1911 and 1939 and has been sentenced to a term (or terms) of imprisonment of at least ten years;

or

- A criminal offence committed in connection with a person's service as a member of a police force, which has been certified by the Home Secretary to have been:
 - Gravely injurious to the interests of the State; or
 - Liable to lead to serious loss of confidence in the public service

Case law states that the individual need not have been a serving officer at the time of the offence in order to meet the requirement that the offence must be connected with his/her service e.g. an offence committed after the pension has retired.

All applications for pension forfeiture are approved by the Home Secretary for approval

Contact Officer

Author:	Louise Clayton
Position:	Chief Executive
Date:	6 November 2025
PFCP meeting date	17 November 2025

Item No. on Agenda**Report to the Police Fire and Crime Panel – 17th November 2025****Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)****Current MTFS Update**

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the Current Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This supports delivery of one of the Commissioner's key responsibilities under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The report sets out the following:

- Update to current year's budget
- Update to future years' MTFS assumptions
- Sensitivity analysis around key financial items
- Update on capital programme

Recommendations

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is asked to note the information contained within this updated MTFS report.

Ben Adams
Staffordshire Commissioner

Contact Officers:

John Bloomer
Director of Resources (S151 Officer for Staffordshire Police)
John.bloomer@staffordshire.police.uk

Sarah Wilkes
Director of Finance (S151 Officer for the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office)
sarah.wilkes@staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk

Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the current MTFS covering the years 2025/26 to 2028/29 including an update on the fiscal landscape facing policing since the MTFS was approved and current year financial performance.
- 1.2 The MTFS for the period 2025/26 to 2028/29 was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner following presentation to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 3rd February 2025.
- 1.3 This MTFS report provides an update to the assumptions within the report and outlines key pressures facing the group.
- 1.4 As part of the budget process for 2026/27, the MTFS will be continually updated, up until the budget proposal by the Commissioner (and endorsement of the precept for Policing and Crime by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel), on 2nd February 2026.
- 1.5 A high-level timetable is included in this report, to lay out the necessary steps and key meetings to communicate the 2026/27 budgeting process and updated MTFS.
- 1.6 The Commissioner asks the panel to note the continued high level of financial uncertainty in regards to emerging government policy around policing. Issues include:
 - No clarity has been given regarding expectations in relation to the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee (NPG) for 2026/27 and it should be noted that the force has flagged as part of its initial bid and continued submissions that the full year effect of the growth exceeds the grant for 2025/26.
 - Above budget pay awards are placing additional strain on forces and whilst the funding anticipated during 2025/26 will cover the increase on a one-off basis, the full year effect of the pay award pressure in 2026/27 won't be. The increased pay award in September 2025 is forecast to result in a £3.5m pressure in 2026/27 for the full-year effect.
 - This update paper reflects the grant funding figures provided as part of the 3-year Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and further clarity has not been given in relation to top slicing for NPG.
 - The CSR headline funding figures include an assumed precept increase, although the exact increase is not yet known. For the purposes of this update, the precept increase is assumed at 2.99% or £8.60.

The Budget Setting Process and Savings/Pressure Review

- 2.1 Financial and budget planning work is undertaken jointly with the Chief Constable to identify pressures and savings, as well as identifying areas for potential new investment in the policing model, should funding be available to do so.
- 2.2 The table below outlines the proposed budget timetable for the 2026/27 MTFS:

Date	Activity
June 2025	Resource Allocation Challenge panels (savings targets)
September 2025	Review capital programme commences
September 2025	TOM v budget reconciliation and recalculation of pay budgets
September 2025	Revised MTFS position based on recalculation of pay budgets and known pressures/savings to date
September 2025	Command review of current MTFS
September 2025	Review inflation assumptions
September 2025	Review reserves position
End September/ Beginning October	Resource Allocation Challenge panels (to present the pressures, flag any risks and Priority Based Resourcing review)
17 th November 2025	Police Fire & Crime Panel – MTFS Update
26 th November 2025	Autumn Budget
December 2025	Resource Allocation Challenge Panels – Round 3
December 2025	Launch Public Consultation regarding precept
December 2025	Funding settlement
December 2025	Refine detailed budgets
December 2025	Finalise capital programme
December 2025	Presentation of draft budget requirement to the Commissioner
Mid-January 2026	Final Council Tax Precept Positions from districts
January 2026	Draft Panel report – presentation to SGB on 23/01/2026
2 nd February 2026	Police Fire & Crime Panel – Recommendation of the budget and precept decision

- 2.3 As part of the above process, Staffordshire Police will hold budget holder 'Resource Allocation and Challenge panels. These sessions, led by the Chief Constable/Deputy Chief Constable, will challenge command leads around areas for new savings derived from the use of HMICFRS and CIPFA benchmarking where levels of funding and outcomes do not align. The Force is continuing its Priority Based Resourcing (PBR) reviews across a handful of areas to provide further scrutiny and greater understanding of use of resources. These reviews provide opportunities to review service levels and identify savings.
- 2.4 The starting position for the savings challenge of £10.9m (post the use of earmarked reserves) for 2026/27 represents c.4% of the overall budget, however as in previous years, there are a number of constraints placed on where savings can be found;

- Nationally police officer numbers are ringfenced (over 50% of the budget is spent just on police officer salaries);
- Locally, contact (call handlers) and Digital, Data and Technology staff numbers are ringfenced;
- The majority of non-pay costs are linked to headcount ergo by ringfencing headcount this ringfences this spend; and,
- Fees and charges are nationally set.

2.5 To aid the planning process the following strategic guidelines have been set out within which planning will be undertaken:

- That the current police officer baseline is as a minimum maintained at 2,002 FTE plus the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee of 53 FTE
- To continue the investment programme in technology to improve service delivery and outcomes
- Where possible, the capital programme will be funded from internal cash
- The overall capital programme will not grow from the amounts allocated for the years in the current MTFS with new additions being offset by reductions elsewhere
- The General Fund reserve balance will be maintained, where possible, to support the ability to internally borrow and provide stability
- Savings will be sought from increased efficiency; income generation or non-pay spend within Staffordshire Police and redundancies avoided where possible
- A commitment to avoid 'cost shunting' between local partners
- To explore further collaboration opportunities both locally, regionally, and nationally and in particular with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Local Context and Updated Financial Position 2025/26

3.1 Since the budget was presented to Police Fire and Crime Panel in February 2025, two material changes have been made to funding/income as follows:

- A national position has been provided in relation to treatment of funding and specific grants which has resulted in a change to the officer maintenance grant. When the budget paper was presented to panel in February 2025, this grant of £5.275m was treated as funding, whereas this is now shown in the accounts as income resulting in a change to the net revenue budget.
- Since setting the 2025/26 budget, additional funding was announced for Staffordshire Police in relation to the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. The report to PFCP included £1.5m grant, whereas the final allocation is £3.014m, an increase of £1.514m. This has a net nil impact to the bottom line because the budget for grants has been increased and the associated expenditure lines.

3.2 The Group (Commissioner and Staffordshire Police) outturn forecast for the current year at the end of Quarter 2 is £271.579m. This is a positive variance of £0.785m (0.29%) against the annual net revenue budget of £272.364m. The detailed revenue position as at Quarter 2 is set out at Appendix 1.

3.3 As at Q2 the revised capital programme is £32.454m for 2025/26 and includes planned spend across Information Technology, Transport, Estates and Equipment. The outline capital programme for each area is set out at Appendix 2.

Review of MTFS 2025/26

4.1 Both the Commissioner and Staffordshire Police are reviewing current planned revenue savings, pressures, proposed priority investments and capital spend. This work has been undertaken over the months of September and October and has identified the following high-level revenue budget changes:

- The pay award for September 2025 was higher than budgeted, which has had an on-going impact to future years. In addition, given the uncertainty regarding the level of pay awards in future years, the 2026/27 assumption has been increased from 2% to 3% and increased from 2% to 2.5% thereafter in line with future inflation estimates provided by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Finance Coordination Committee.
- In recognition of the funding pressures faced by forces following the pay award of 4.2% in September 2025, the Home Office has provided £120m of one-off additional funding, which is £1.8m for Staffordshire. It is assumed that there will be no further funding for this above budget pay award, with the pressure being absorbed locally.
- Additional new permanent savings identified to date by the force through RAC panels and reflected in the table are £4.8m.
- Change to the Local Government Pension Scheme contribution for police staff members from 21.5% to 17% resulting in a saving of £3.1m.
- Grant funding assumptions have been revised in line with NPCC Finance Committee recommendations following the CSR.
- It should be noted that the CSR funding headlines assume an increase in precept funding, although the exact increase is not known. For the purposes of modelling, the NPCC Finance Committee has advised to assume an increase of £14, however this is not reflected in this update.
- On-going revenue costs associated with investments including Axon body worn video, Force Contact Centre improvements and AI technologies.
- Pressures totalling £2.1m have been identified.
- Force non-pay inflation has been revised upwards to 3% resulting in a pressure of £0.5m.

4.2 The table below shows the forecast movement in the MTFS position since the MTFS was set in February 2025 for the changes indicated above:

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
Underlying position	(11.5)	(16.5)	(21.2)
Reserve movements	0.6	0.0	0.0
Reported budget gap February 2025	(10.9)	(16.5)	(21.2)
Change funding assumptions to match CSR	5.8	7.7	7.2
Command Savings	4.8	4.8	4.8
Change in LGPS employer pension contribution from 21.5% to 17%	3.1	3.2	3.4
Base pay review	1.3	1.3	1.4
Use of budget support reserve - bank holiday	0.4	0.0	0.0
Bank holiday overtime	(0.4)	0.0	0.0
Non-pay inflation	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.5)
Remove use of budget support reserve	(0.6)	0.0	0.0
Investments	(0.7)	(1.2)	(1.2)
Pay award review for 2026/27 - from 2% to 3% & 2.5% thereafter	(1.4)	(3.7)	(5.1)
Pressures	(2.1)	(2.0)	(1.8)
Pay pressures arising from pay award at 4.2% in September 2025 (budgeted 2.8%)	(3.5)	(3.6)	(3.8)
Revised (Gap)	(4.8)	(10.6)	(16.9)

4.3 The table below shows the changes in assumptions based on the MTFS set in February 2025, compared to the changes assumed in the table above:

Category		2026/27 %	2027/28 %	2028/29 %
Pay award	MTFS	2.00	2.00	2.00
	Revised	3.00	2.50	2.50
General non-pay inflation	MTFS	2.00	2.00	2.00
	Revised	3.00	2.00	2.00

4.4 Each 1% increase in non-pay inflation equates to a pressure of c.£0.5m.

4.5 The position shown above assumes a precept increase of 2.99% in 2026/27, which equates to a £8.60 increase on a band D property, which is what was assumed in the approved MTFS in February 2025.

- 4.6 The 2025/26 MTFS assumed a use of the budget support reserve in years 2025/26 to 2026/27. This assumption has been reversed in 2026/27 in the figures presented above.
- 4.7 Whilst using the budget support reserve remains available to use over the life of the MTFS the usage of the reserve needs to be balanced against a number of factors. These factors include using the reserve to smooth out the incremental savings requirement or allowing for targeted one-off investment.
- 4.8 In addition to the above, panel should note that whilst the uplift in police officer numbers mandated by central government is welcome, in essence this 'ring fences' well over half the budget from efficiency savings and redesigns. This means that in relation to savings on employment costs these can only come from police staff and PCSO roles.
- 4.9 The force has a comprehensive Efficiency Plan which has three key deliverables:
- Save to live within our means
 - Save to be sustainable through targeted investment
 - Securing a workforce mix that enables productivity and operational flexibility.

Funding Assumptions

- 4.10 The Commissioner receives funding from a number of sources with the majority of this being through core Home Office funding and the Council Tax precept. Income assumptions are currently being reviewed as part of the MTFS process; the Police funding settlement is usually received in December.
- 4.11 The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented her Spending Review (SR25) to Parliament on Wednesday 11th June 2025 with headlines of police spending power increasing by an average 1.7% per year in real terms over the Spending Review period (2025/26 to 2028/29) with a focus on restoring public confidence in policing and reflecting the government's Plan for Change commitment to neighbourhood policing growth and police reform. The Spending Review also includes projected increases in council tax precept; however, the exact increase assumptions are unknown unlike local government. Full details of the annual police funding will be set out in the Police Funding Settlement which isn't expected until mid-December 2025.
- 4.12 The government is maintaining its commitment to the growth of 13,000 more officers and PCSOs in neighbourhood policing. However, there is a lack of clarity in relation to expectations on forces in 2026/27. There is a material risk that there is a requirement to increase neighbourhood numbers further within the funding envelope of the Home Office Core Police Grant figures included within this update as assumed from the Spending Review headlines. The current assumption is that the £3.014m received in 2025/26 is cash flat.
- 4.13 For 2025/26, the group received the below grants and in line with the NPCC Finance Committee guidance, these have been assumed as per existing i.e. cash flat, which result in a real terms cut:

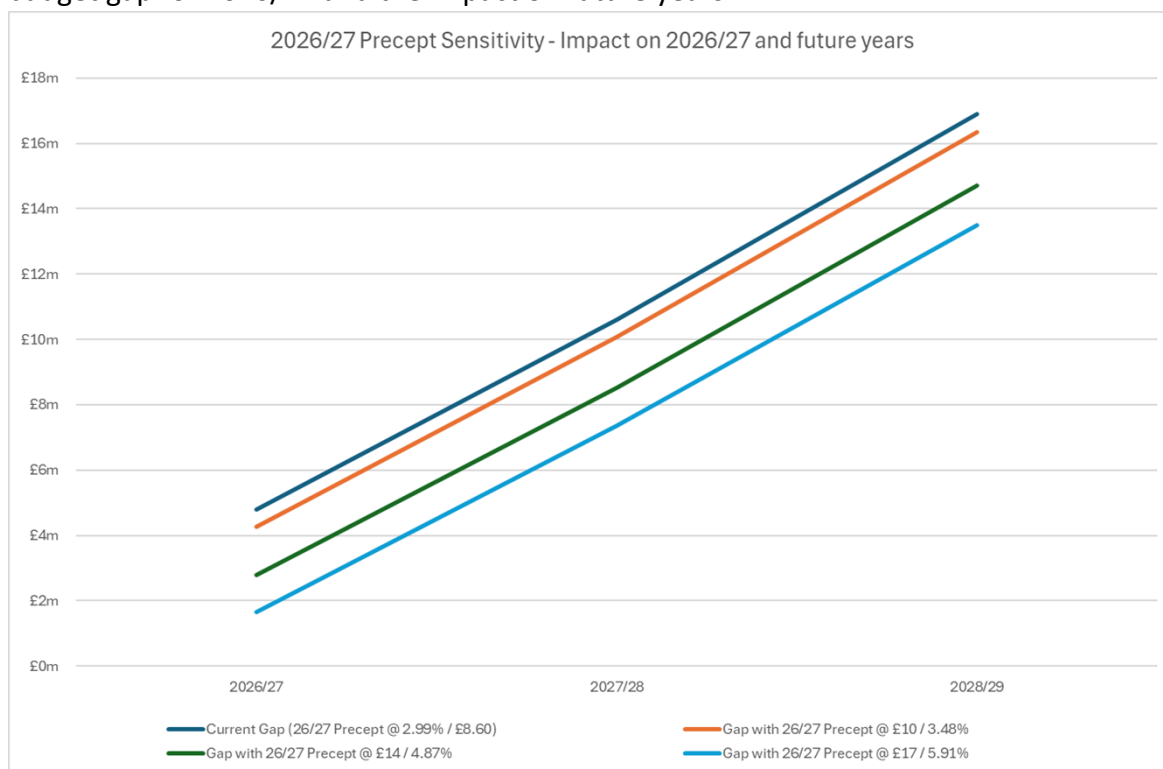
- Ring-fenced officer maintenance grant (£5.275m)
- Additional recruitment top-up grant (£2.845m)
- Legacy Council Tax Support grant (£11.965m)
- Pensions Grant (£5.291m)
- National Insurance Contribution grant (£3.532m)

4.14 Demand pressures on existing business and investment in service enhancements may need to be funded through increases in precept, savings or additional income being sourced.

4.15 The Government is likely to continue with the previous Government's policy to afford additional precept flexibility above the level currently assumed as a means of funding policing nationally. The Commissioner will balance the needs of policing for additional funding against the ability of Staffordshire residents to afford the policing precept; the current assumption in 2026/27 is an increase of 2.99%.

4.16 Should the Government grant the same flexibility as 2025/26 of £14 per annum for a band D property, this equates to 4.87% and would reduce the budget gap by £2m in 2026/27. A precept increase of £10 would result in an additional £0.5m and an increase of £17 would be additional funding of £3m. It has not been confirmed when the precept flexibility will be announced.

4.17 The chart below sets out the impact of changes in the 2026/27 precept funding on the budget gap for 2026/27 and the impact on future years.



- 4.18 The impact of the on-going challenges on our council tax base is unknown. An assumption of a 1% increase in the council tax base is included within the position. Currently, there is no assumption in relation to a surplus/deficit on the collection fund.

Inflation Assumptions and Sensitivity

- 4.19 Despite ongoing efforts to control inflation, the Bank of England has acknowledged that challenges persist. Services inflation has been slow to decline, in part because of high wage growth (linked to increases in the National Living Wage and National Insurance Contributions increases), food prices continue to rise, energy costs and regulated price hikes, such as for water bills and previous increases in energy costs have put upward pressure on inflation.
- 4.20 Funding assumptions included within this update are reflective of the CSR announcements for policing shared by NPCC. There are a number of underlying assumptions in relation to no further top slicing and precept levels which remain subject to confirmation, therefore there is a risk of material changes late on in the planning process. This cannot be avoided but needs to be recognised.
- 4.21 The table below sets out the budget assumptions presented to the panel for the 2025/26 MTFS:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Description	Budget	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
<u>Police Officers</u>				
Pay Award	2.8%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Incremental uplift	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Pension Contribution	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%
<u>Police Staff</u>				
Pay Award	2.8%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Incremental uplift	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Pension Contribution	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%
<u>Non-Pay Inflation</u>				
General	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Utilities & Fuel	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
<u>Funding & Income</u>				
Government Funding*	4.97%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Council Tax Base Increase	1.01%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Variable Income Charges	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Council Tax Precept Increase	5.12%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%

*For 2025/26 includes Pensions Grant, NI Funding, Officer Maintenance Grant & Additional Recruitment Top Up

- 4.22 Consumer Prices Inflation is running at 3.8% in the 12 months to September 2025, no change from 3.8% in August 2025. Whilst it is anticipated to remain at this level for the remainder of the year, there are reductions anticipated within the MTFS period; the MTFS assumptions have been amended accordingly.
- 4.23 The non-pay inflation assumption for 2026/27 has been revised up to 3% given the current projections.
- 4.24 The current MTFS assumes pay awards at 2% per annum for 2026/27. For planning purposes, the assumption reflected in this MTFS update is an increase to 3% and for years 2027/28 onwards, the current MTFS assumes 2% which has been increased to 2.5%. These changes are in line with national guidance provided by the NPCC Finance Coordination Committee.
- 4.25 For indicative purposes, the table below from the 2025/26 MTFS highlights the impact of changes to the MTFS position:

Cost Area	Change	£'000
Police Pay	1%	1,418
PCSO/Police Staff	1%	888
Utilities	1%	23
Vehicle costs	1%	39
Supplies & Services	1%	101
Police Pension Contribution	1%	904
Police Core Grant Funding	1%	1,427
Precept	£1	370
Precept	1%	1,063

Capital and Treasury Management

- 1.1 As part of the current MTFS refresh, capital plans across both Staffordshire Police and the Commissioner's Office are being refreshed.
- 1.2 The Commissioner has set a desire to see greater economy and efficiency being obtained from infrastructure investment. This includes the benefits arising from such investment both in terms of productivity gain but also cashable savings. Once again, this will be a key theme for the Commissioner in agreeing the 2026/27 capital programme.
- 1.3 In accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26, cash has continued to be used in lieu of borrowing and no new long-term loans were raised in the first half of the financial year. The last date a loan was taken out was in February 2019.

- 1.4 During the first 6 months of the 2025/26 financial year, the Commissioner has repaid a £0.5m loan funded by the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). No new loans will be taken out in year with the capital programme funded from a mix of revenue contributions, capital receipts and internal borrowing. By not replacing these loans the Commissioner will continue to make savings on interest payments.
- 1.5 Currently interest rate returns are lower than new borrowing costs meaning that the strategy of using cash remains important and represents a cost-effective and flexible way of financing the capital programme. Overall, the short-term interest rate environment now and for future forecasts both still support the borrowing strategy adopted in the 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy.
- 1.6 Forecasts indicate the Commissioner should have sufficient cash balances to fund its debt for 2025/26. However, debt is likely to increase in the future due to continued capital expenditure incurred on new projects such as the firing range, upgrades to buildings, IT, etc. Therefore, the Commissioner is likely to require further external long-term borrowing in the future.
- 1.7 In addition to the above, the current internal cash balances are earning a significantly higher rate of return than budgeted generating a surplus in the 2025/26 financial year.

Reserves

- 1.8 The General Fund reserve is £9.784m, which is 3.59% of the 2025/26 net revenue budget in line with the Commissioner's Reserves Strategy, with no forecast draw on this reserve in year anticipated.
- 1.9 Earmarked reserves are held for specific purposes. As part of the MTFS refresh process both Section 151 Officers will review the adequacy and intended use of these reserves with a view to providing support to the MTFS.
- 1.10 A budget support reserve was established in 2021/22. The projected balance of this at the year-end is £4.782m following budgeted use of £3.645m in 2025/26. The current MTFS assumed a drawdown of £0.623m in 2026/27; for planning purposes, this has been reversed in this update. There is a requirement to use £0.4m to fund the pressure from additional bank holidays falling within 2026/27 on a one-off basis.
- 1.11 Reserves, whilst set aside for a particular purpose, are utilised in cash terms to support capital spend in lieu of external borrowing. The mid-year Treasury Management update indicated that by internally funding from cash in lieu of borrowing, this has saved the Commissioner around £141,000 in interest payments so far, this financial year. A full year figure will be reported in the 2025/26 outturn report.

Appendix 1 – Detailed Revenue Position as at Quarter 2 2025/26

	Year to Date			Forecast		
	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Pay						
Police Officer Pay Costs	71,094	70,615	(479)	145,504	145,210	(295)
PCSO Pay Costs	4,449	4,409	(41)	8,549	9,345	797
Police Staff Pay Costs	40,945	39,681	(1,264)	82,756	81,911	(845)
Other Employee Costs	2,564	2,324	(240)	5,065	5,095	29
Police Officer Pensions	2,201	1,911	(291)	4,403	4,392	(11)
	121,254	118,939	(2,315)	246,277	245,952	(325)
Non Pay						
Repairs & Maintenance	16	26	10	32	42	11
Other Premises Costs	3,267	2,934	(333)	6,534	6,355	(179)
Vehicle Costs	2,052	1,874	(178)	4,109	4,021	(87)
Other Travel Costs	375	330	(45)	750	686	(63)
Operational Supplies & Service	4,137	3,733	(404)	8,006	8,043	37
Communications & Computers	6,701	6,084	(617)	13,532	13,300	(231)
Administration	749	803	53	1,939	2,159	220
Other Supplies & Services	254	209	(45)	1,357	1,414	57
	17,551	15,992	(1,558)	36,257	36,020	(237)
Contracted						
Third Party Payments	9,556	8,405	(1,151)	18,980	19,195	215
	9,556	8,405	(1,151)	18,980	19,195	215
Capital Financing						
Capital Financing Costs	7,229	6,701	(528)	7,829	7,568	(262)
	7,229	6,701	(528)	7,829	7,568	(262)
Income						
Grants & Contributions	(5,544)	(4,314)	1,229	(20,676)	(20,975)	(299)
Reimbursements	(3,523)	(3,335)	188	(7,283)	(7,095)	189
Sales, Fees & Charges	(1,158)	(1,528)	(370)	(2,315)	(2,495)	(181)
Other Income	(680)	(1,105)	(424)	(1,361)	(1,788)	(427)
	(10,905)	(10,282)	622	(31,635)	(32,353)	(718)
Funding						
Reserve Transfers	(1,615)	(1,125)	490	(5,671)	(4,609)	1,062
Use of capital receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge direct to capital	(96)	(97)	(1)	(195)	(195)	(0)
Intra Group Transfers	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(1,711)	(1,222)	489	(5,866)	(4,804)	1,062
Unallocated Savings						
Unallocated Savings	(42)	0	42	521	0	(521)
	(42)	0	42	521	0	(521)
Total Revenue Budget	142,931	138,532	(4,400)	272,364	271,579	(785)

Appendix 2 – Quarter 2 Capital Programme

Portfolio	Approved Capital Programme 2025/26 £000	Budget Reprofiled from 2024/25 £000	Restated Capital Programme 2025/26 £000	In Year Changes to Programme £000	Revised Capital programme £000	Total Spend to Date £000	Capital Programme Remaining £000
Digital, Data and Technology	12,465	1,528	13,993	(3,025)	10,968	2,817	8,151
Estates	12,869	3,612	16,481	340	16,821	12,399	4,422
Transport	2,000	1,021	3,021	214	3,235	2,958	277
Equipment	340	1,107	1,447	(17)	1,430	1,088	342
Total Capital Programme	27,674	7,268	34,942	(2,488)	32,454	19,262	13,192

Capital Funding 2025/26	Approved Capital Funding 2025/26 £000	Funding Reprofiled from 2024/25 £000	Restated Capital Funding 2025/26 £000	In Year Changes to Capital Funding £000	Revised Capital Funding 2025/26 £000
Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital	(2,157)	0	(2,157)	(264)	(2,421) *
Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0	(1,072)	(1,072)
Internal Borrowing Requirement	(25,517)	(7,268)	(32,785)	3,824	(28,961)
Total Capital Programme	(27,674)	(7,268)	(34,942)	(2,488)	(32,454)

*There is £20k additional revenue contribution to capital (RCCO) to fund the SSRP vehicle replacement yet to be transacted. Also, in the Q2 Revenue Finance Report, if approved, it is assumed that an additional RCCO will be used to fund the capital programme from the interest on balances surplus.

Report to the Police Fire and Crime Panel**17 November 2025****Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)****Current MTFS Update (Fire)**

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the Current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This supports delivery of one of the Commissioner's key responsibilities under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The report sets out the following:

- Executive summary and background to Fair Funding Review
- Update on current year's reported position (Half Year)
- Update on future years' MTFS assumptions
- Sensitivity analysis around key financial items
- Update on Capital Programme and Reserves

Recommendations

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is asked to note the information contained within this updated MTFS report

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Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the current MTFS covering the years 2025/26 to 2029/30 including an update on the fiscal landscape facing the Fire and Rescue Service, current year financial performance and reviews the future assumptions for pay and inflation and also future funding following the consultation on the Fair Funding Review 2.0.
- 1.2 The MTFS for the five-year period 2025/26 to 2029/30 was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner following presentation to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 10 February 2025. The budget included a £5 increase in Council Tax (5.76%) in line with the referendum limit.
- 1.3 The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was announced in Spring 2025 which set out the revenue funding allocations for each Government department over the next three years (2026/27 to 2028/29).
- 1.4 The Fair Funding Review consultation published in June 2025 plans for multi-year settlements, grant simplification and proposes changes to Settlement Funding Assessment. Modelling suggests that the Government grant for standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities will reduce by more than 4% over the next three years. This equates to a loss of funding of £102m which is the equivalent of 1,500 full time firefighter roles in FRAs alone. The funding reduction for this Authority is modelled at £3.5m, equivalent to 50 full time firefighter roles or the wholetime crewing numbers for two fire stations.
- 1.5 The MTFS assumptions around pay and pensions remain under close scrutiny and are considered in more detail within this report. Future pay pressure will only increase as headline CPI and RPI indicators continue above expected levels.
- 1.6 A high-level timetable is included in this report, to lay out the necessary steps and key meetings to communicate the 2026/27 budgeting process and updated MTFS.
- 1.7 The Staffordshire Commissioner is committed to ensuring that the Service continues to develop its transformation plan in order to meet the new financial and operational challenges. Further transformation workstreams will need to be developed into the medium term based upon a likely material reduction in funding for the next three-year period.
- 1.8 This update paper incorporates the latest funding scenario's as per the Fair Funding Review based upon the model received by the National Fire Chiefs Council and also considers a downside scenario. The Government's response to the consultation is yet to be published.
- 1.9 The Commissioner will incorporate a number of Council Tax scenarios into the budget consultation process for 2026/27 giving the residents of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent the opportunity to have their say.
- 1.10 As part of the budget process for 2026/27 the MTFS will be updated as further information becomes available and assumptions become more certain, up until the confirmation of the budget proposal by the Commissioner (and endorsement of the precept for Fire by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel), on 9 February 2026.

- 1.11 The Fire and Rescue Service published an updated Community Risk Management Plan in December 2024 (CRMP) that sits alongside the Commissioner's updated Fire and Rescue Plan, which sets out the financial context and budget planning priorities.

2.0 The Budget Process

- 2.1 The budget process for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service for the fiscal year 2026/27 has now commenced. As in previous years, the budget will be developed using a zero-base approach, with comprehensive consultations involving budget holders.
- 2.2 All budget holders are required to attend a budget challenge session to review proposals for 2026/27 and 2027/28 and identify efficiencies and mitigations for current year cost pressures. A Principal Officer, along with finance representatives, will attend all major budget challenge meetings to ensure consistent and appropriate scrutiny. This approach has been successful in previous years and continues to enhance the financial acumen of all budget holders.
- 2.3 The headline timetable for the 2026/27 budget process is shown below:

<u>Budget Timetable</u>	<u>Task</u>
16 October 2025	Budget Preparation commenced
16 October for 6 weeks	Budget holder consultation
18 November, 19 December	Capital Review Group Meetings
26 November 2025	Chancellor to deliver Autumn Budget
28 November – 5 December 2025	Draft pay and non-pay budget ready for review process
w/c 15 December 2025 (tbc)	Draft Local Government Finance Settlement (date tbc)
December 2025 – January 2026	Budget Consultation and budget presentations to the Strategic Governance Board (28/01/26) and Service Management Board (6/01/26)
9 February 2026	Police, Fire and Crime Panel- Precept setting and Budget 2026/27 / MTFS report / capital and treasury management strategy reports
13 February 2026	All precept notices issued following Commissioner approval

3.0 Background and updated Financial Position 2025/26

3.1 The total revenue budget was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner for 2025/26 at **£51.996m**, following presentation to the Panel in February 2025.

3.2 Settlement Funding for the Authority comprises of three funding streams shown below. The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Business Rates top-up are shown below as per the Local Government Finance Settlement issued for 2025/26, with the 1% share of local business rates based upon the estimated position for the nine local billing authorities.

3.3 The Settlement Funding for 2025/26 was made up of three separate areas:

	2025/26 £m
1% share of Local Business Rates	3.980
Business Rates Top-up	6.568
RSG (Revenue Support Grant)	7.621
Total Settlement Funding	18.169

3.4 The Total Settlement Funding for 2025/26 included the £1.707m Firefighters' Pension Grant which was rolled into RSG from 2024/25. The Authority budgeted for a further grant in 2025/26 of £1.243m following the further increase in employer contribution rates, the grant received was £1.161m.

3.5 In addition to the above Council Tax is collected by the nine billing authorities in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The current band D Council Tax is set at £91.77 (£1.76 per week) for the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority, resulting in collection of **£33.828m** for 2025/26 based upon a collection tax base of 369,558 properties and a collection fund deficit of **£0.086m**.

3.6 The total funding for the Staffordshire Commissioner for 2025/26 is shown below

	2025/26
Settlement Funding	£18,169m (35%)
Council Tax (Precept)	£33,828m (65%)
Total Funding	£51,996m

Financial Position – as at 30 September 2025 (See Appendix A)

3.7 The total revenue spend as at 30 September 2025 was £26.2m with the headline revenue position remaining on track for the year despite a forecast overspend on pay, which is estimated to close c.£0.4m (1.3%) above budget.

- 3.8 This pay overspend has been driven by the significant increase in operational demand experienced during the first six months of the year with the total number of operational incidents attended during this six-month period, up 22% on last year. Operational activity in September reduced back to more normal levels with secondary fires attended down to 133 from 414 incidents in the month as the weather conditions become increasingly more unsettled following the warm and dry summer. The year-end pay forecast has been updated and reflects this reducing trend continuing for the second half of 2025/26.
- 3.9 Total non-pay costs are slightly favourable to budget with no significant pressure on the annual budget forecast, but this will be monitored through the winter period.
- 4.0 Income is favourable with Interest Receivable achieving a better return than budget. Interest rates were reduced to 4% by the Bank of England in August and held at 4% in September with interest rates remaining at the lowest level for 2 years. One further rate cut in year is still expected which could see some of the benefit accrued year to date reducing.
- 4.1 Capital financing costs are £0.2m better than budget with a lower MRP charge forecast following the outturn capital position reported for 2024/25.
- 4.2 The first draft of the annual forecast has also been completed which includes any known material variances. The annual forecast before the use of reserves shows a small saving to budget of £0.1m. The annual forecast will be reviewed in detail and refined as part of the 2025/26 budget setting exercise which will include detailed consultation with all budget holders (see above).
- 4.3 The 2025/26 Revenue spend summary as at 30 September 2025 is shown in Appendix A.

MTFS Assumptions and Update

- 4.4 The Commissioner receives funding from a number of sources as outlined above with the majority of this being received through Settlement Funding and the Council Tax Precept. Funding and income assumptions are currently being reviewed as part of the MTFS process ahead of the Settlement Funding expected to be received week commencing 15 December 2025.
- 4.5 The Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation document outlining the proposals for the next three-year settlement and was issued by The Local Government Finance Directorate within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The consultation ran for 8 weeks from 20 June 2025 to 15 August 2025.
- 4.6 The consultation outlined the government's proposed approach to local authority funding reform through the Local Government Finance Settlement from 2026/27. The objective was set out within the consultation to rebuild public services that the most vulnerable in our society rely on by directing money to where it needs to go, enabling more spending on prevention and less on crisis management.

- 4.7 The Fair Funding Review refreshes the methodology for distributing a fixed pot of funding between local authorities covered by the local government finance settlement using a Relative Needs Formula (RNF). Whilst many RNFs have been fully reviewed the data underpinning the Fire and Rescue RNF has simply been updated to reflect up to date data.
- 4.8 Based on exemplifications of the spending review and modelling of the impacts of the fair funding review prepared by the NFCC professional advisors, this identified that there are real and significant cuts in central government funding for the fire and rescue service. The financial modelling shows a potential cut of £102m in real terms for standalone fire and rescue services – equivalent to circa 1500 firefighter posts.
- 4.9 For the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority the reduction in funding over the next three years is estimated at £3.5m. This reduction in funding was also verified by further independent financial modelling undertaken by LG Futures. This reduction is equivalent to more than 50 wholetime firefighter posts.
- 4.10 The Government's proposals are underpinned by modelling that assumes a £5 precept flexibility will be granted for the multi-year settlement period, although this needs to be confirmed by Government, and that all fire authorities (FRAs) take this maximum increase. The Government continues to assume that the historic increases in council taxbase have been used as the basis for future growth as part of the calculation of Comprehensive Spending Power. Whilst the £5 council tax flexibility is welcomed it means that the burden of funding for essential emergency services will increasingly be borne by local council taxpayers and the responsibility sitting with the Staffordshire Commissioner.
- 4.11 The National Fire Chiefs Council and the Commissioner will continue to lobby at a local and national level for a sustainable financial settlement and not one that will compromise community safety and public resilience.
- 4.12 A consultation response was returned by the National Fire Chief's Council and by the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 4.13 The current MTFS Assumptions have been updated as follows, with the impact upon the current MTFS shown within paragraph 4.14:



Category	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Plan	2027/28 Plan	2028/29 Plan	2029/30 Plan
<u>Pay Award</u>					
MTFS	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
REVISED	3.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
<u>General Inflation</u>					
MTFS	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
REVISED	0.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
<u>Council Tax</u>					
MTFS	5.8%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
REVISED	5.8%	5.4%	5.2%	4.9%	2.0%
<u>Settlement Funding</u>					
MTFS	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
REVISED	2.0%	(4.6%)	(4.2%)	(5.0%)	2.4%

- 4.14 The overall position into the medium term shows an increasing gap in revenue funding over the MTFS period of £0.54m by 2028/29. The table below shows the estimated impact of major assumptions based upon the current reporting position and the updated MTFS assumptions:

Scenario - Assuming £5 Council Tax Increase for 3 years	2026/27 Plan £m	2027/28 Plan £m	2028/29 Plan £m
Use of reserves / MTFS budget GAP - February 2025	(0.54)	(0.22)	0.25
Pay Pressure - increase 1% in 2026/27	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.32)
Firefighters' Pension - lower grant awarded 2025/26	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Oncall Firefighters Pay - allowance for additional activity	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Removal of Business Rates Pool Income	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Capital Financing Costs	0.33	0.33	0.33
Other movements	0.03	(0.04)	(0.03)
<u>Funding</u>			
Impact of Fair Funding review	(1.20)	(2.30)	(3.51)
Council Tax assumed increase £5	1.18	2.38	3.58
Use of reserves / MTFS budget GAP - November 2025	(1.06)	(0.75)	(0.30)
Movement	(0.52)	(0.53)	(0.54)

- 4.15 If Council Tax increases were restricted to 1.99% for the three-year period the resultant gap in funding of £3.88m would require further significant Service transformation, resulting in a degradation of Service levels provided to our communities.



Scenario - Assuming 1.99% Council Tax Increase for 3 years	2026/27 Plan £m	2027/28 Plan £m	2028/29 Plan £m
Use of reserves / MTFS budget GAP - February 2025	(0.54)	(0.22)	0.25
Pay Pressure - increase 1% in 2026/27	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.32)
Firefighters' Pension - lower grant awarded 2025/26	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Oncall Firefighters Pay - allowance for additional activity	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Removal of Business Rates Pool Income	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Capital Financing Costs	0.33	0.33	0.33
Other movements	0.03	(0.04)	(0.03)
Funding			
Impact of Fair Funding review	(1.20)	(2.30)	(3.51)
Council Tax assumed increase 1.99%	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Use of reserves / MTFS budget GAP - November 2025	(2.25)	(3.13)	(3.88)
Movement	(1.71)	(2.91)	(4.13)

4.16 Pay Award and Pressures

The actual pay award for operational (Grey Book) staff was agreed at 3.2% for 2025/26, and recently the Local Government Pay Award was settled for Fire staff (Green Book) at 3.2% back dated to 1 April 2025. The revenue budget assumption for 2025/26 at 3% for all staff was therefore a reasonable estimate at the time when compared to CPI reported at 1.7% in September 2024.

The headline rates of inflation, however, has increased during 2025 and the average pay awards are currently well above the 2% estimated within the MTFS for 2026/27 and the estimate has now been increased to 3% but note this may not meet the pressure on pay levels demanded by the representative bodies.

CPI inflation increased to 3.5% in Q2 2025 and is expected to peak at 3.8% reported in September 2025. Projections forecast that CPI will fall to 2.7% in a year's time before reaching the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) 2% target by Q3 2027. The MPC voted to reduce the Bank of England base rate by 0.25% to 4% in August 2025. It is anticipated this will continue to fall and reach 3.5% by Q3 2026.

The panel should note that the pay negotiations for a majority of staff employed by the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority are carried out nationally, unless local agreements are in place.

4.17 Oncall Firefighters increased activity levels

The pay for Oncall firefighters consists of a number of elements which are linked to activity i.e. the number of turnouts and incidents attended. For 2025/26 the number of incidents attended has increased by 22% in the first six months and a detailed review of the required budget pay will be undertaken as part of the budget and MTFS update. For this update an additional £0.3m has been included which assumes that broadly 50% of the additional activity is also experienced in future years.

- 4.18 This is also impacted by the successful recruitment of new Oncall Firefighters which is up 17.9 FTE on last year, and also the impact and benefits of riding with three riders to some incident types.

4.19 Business Rates Pool Income

The Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority is a constituent member of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Business Rates Pool. A payment £0.2m is made to the Authority as part of the terms and conditions of membership.

Based upon the Business Rates reset it is unlikely that a Business Rates Pool will exist for 2026/27.

4.20 Changes to Capital Financing

The improvements to capital financing costs have arisen following a reduced Minimum Revenue Provision (MPR) liability resulting from the actual year end position and additional revenue financing of capital expenditure.

4.21 Airwave / Motorola Charges

The forecast assumes that the service credit from Motorola is transferred into a new Emergency Services Network (ESN) Reserve. A credit of 51.34% is expected but as not yet been received by the Service.

This new Reserve will be held in order to support the costs of migration to the replacement ESN.

5.0 Sensitivity Analysis

- 5.1 The MTFS refresh is being undertaken in a continuing uncertain environment and this should be noted by the Panel. It has been announced as part of the Fair Funding Review that the next settlement will cover a three year period.



- 5.2 Funding assumptions both in relation to local and national funding are likely to cause material changes late on in the planning process, something that cannot be avoided but needs to be recognised. It is unknown if there will be any changes made following the Fair Funding consultation for the Fire and Rescue Sector until the draft local government finance settlement is received in December.
- 5.3 The following sensitivity analysis is based upon the approved MTFS paper from February 2025:

Cost / Income Area	Change	£000s
Pay Costs	+/- 1%	317
Premises Costs (incl utilities)	+/- 1%	24
Vehicles	+/- 1%	10
Supplies and Services	+/- 1%	94
Employer Pension Contributions	+/- 1%	233
Business Rates	+/- 1%	22
Revenue Support Grant	+/- 1%	58
Precept	+/- 1%	321
Council Tax Base	+/- 1%	317

6.0 Service Transformation

- 6.1 The requirement for Service Transformation is to ensure that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service “is able to provide a modern, efficient and sustainable level of service to the public which does not compromise the safety of our staff or our communities”
- 6.2 As a result, the Service has been undergoing a multi-phase transformation to meet financial sustainability targets set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Following the successful completion of Phase 1, which delivered substantial recurring savings, the focus has shifted to the implementation of Phase 2 initiatives.
- 6.3 The phase 1 transformation workstreams (2022–2025) delivered £1.3m of recurring savings, with a further phase 2 target of £1m set by the Commissioner to be delivered by 2029
- 6.4 The Service is well on the way to deliver the additional £1m, with declared savings of £0.5m reported by the Transformation Board.
- 6.5 The Transformation Board is chaired and led by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Glynn Luznyj.
- 6.6 The attention and focus of the Transformation Board is moving towards the identification and delivery of additional financial savings as a direct result of the £3.5m of funding reduction identified within this report.

7.0 Capital (See Appendix B)

- 7.1 As part of the current MTFS refresh and budget build for 2026/27 capital plans across Staffordshire Fire are being refreshed. This work is undertaken through the Capital Review Group that is chaired by the Director of Finance.
- 7.2 The capital programme forecast for 2025/26 at £6.0m reflects the latest position for a number of projects and is showing a £0.9m reduction from the approved budget of £6.9m. The capital programme for Estates now reflects the latest programme with some projects moving into 2026/27 due to availability of resources. The capital programme spend commitment as at 30 September 2025 was £2.9m, 48% of forecast.
- 7.4 The building enhancement programme this year included two large refurbishment projects, at Brewood Fire Station and at the Joint Engineering and Transport Site (part funded by Police).
- 7.5 A full capital programme update and Capital Strategy will be presented to the Panel in February 2026 as part of the budget and MTFS papers.
- 7.6 The Capital Programme as at 30 September 2025 is shown in Appendix B.

8.0 Reserves and Balances

- 8.1 The Authority holds two reserves, an Earmarked Reserve which is built up through any surplus within the Income and Expenditure account. The utilisation of this fund has been established with the approved Reserves Strategy; and a General Reserve which is held to protect against any emergency conditions that may arise.
- 8.2 The Commissioner currently holds £1.9m in General Reserves and a risk assessment for this reserve was undertaken as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26 and the overall provision of £1.9m has remained unchanged for a number of years and represents 3.6% of the revenue budget for the year.
- 8.3 At 1 April 2025 the Authority held £6.8m in Specific/Earmarked Reserves. This reserve is supported by the approved Reserves Strategy which will be updated for the new budget year. This reserve has continued to reduce following earmarked contribution to capital spend, reducing long term debt, in line with the approved strategy.
- 8.4 The amount of earmarked reserves required to support the budget setting process for 2025/26 and the consideration for future transformation requirements will be reviewed as part of the updated reserves strategy report and MTFS update. The utilisation of additional levels of earmarked reserves will be required to support the budget for 2026/27 based upon the upward pressures identified within this report.
- 8.5 Reserves, whilst set aside for a particular purpose, currently are utilised in cash terms to support capital spend in lieu of taking additional external borrowing at this time.

Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Appendix A

Financial Position as at 30th September 2025

FINANCE REPORT SUMMARY									
TOTAL REVENUE									
Period 6 - 30th September 2025									
	Current Month			Year to Date			Full Year 2025/26		
	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Variance £'000
Pay	2,938	3,039	(101)	17,629	17,980	(351)	35,229	35,678	(449)
Non Pay									
Premises Costs	180	137	42	3,403	3,292	110	4,687	4,637	50
Transport Costs	79	81	(3)	602	571	31	1,139	1,139	0
Supplies & Services Costs	479	456	23	3,679	3,561	117	6,561	6,611	(50)
CFS Initiatives	27	32	(5)	160	132	28	320	260	60
Other Support Services	624	629	(5)	3,737	3,774	(37)	7,524	7,501	23
	1,388	1,335	53	11,580	11,331	249	20,232	20,149	83
Income, Grants & Interest Rec'd	(611)	(655)	44	(2,558)	(2,804)	247	(5,133)	(5,383)	250
Financing Costs	20	20	(0)	359	357	2	2,940	2,704	236
Total before use of reserves	3,735	3,740	(4)	27,010	26,863	147	53,268	53,148	120
Use of Reserves	(106)	(111)	5	(636)	(668)	32	(1,272)	(1,152)	(120)
Total after Use of Reserves	3,629	3,628	1	26,374	26,195	179	51,996	51,996	0
Non-Recurring	0	10	(10)	0	27	(27)	0	0	0
Total Revenue Costs	3,629	3,639	(9)	26,374	26,222	153	51,996	51,996	0

Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Appendix B

Capital Programme Position as at 30th September 2025

Financial Position - 1st April 2025 to 30th September 2025

	Capital Programme Budget 2025/26			Capital Programme Forecast 2025/26			Actual to Date 2025/26	Capital Programme Remaining
	Approved Budget 2025/26 £	Reprofiling of Budget from 2024/25 £	Restated Capital Programme £	Savings Identified £	Projects rolled forward and other £	Latest Forecast Programme £	Total £	
Building Enhancements	1,356,677	780,000	2,136,677	(180,000)	(321,000)	1,635,677	727,698	907,979
Operational Equipment	879,000	147,554	1,026,554	0	(43,479)	983,075	275,608	707,467
Vehicles								
Heavy Fleet	1,590,000	20,000	1,610,000	0	0	1,610,000	815,612	794,388
Light Fleet	715,000	109,500	824,500	0	0	824,500	604,553	219,947
	2,305,000	129,500	2,434,500	0	0	2,434,500	1,420,165	1,014,335
Information Technology	1,260,000	25,000	1,285,000	0	(338,431)	946,569	394,921	551,649
Total Capital Programme	5,800,677	1,082,054	6,882,731	(180,000)	(702,910)	5,999,821	2,818,392	3,181,430





Police, Fire and Crime Panel – 17 November 2025

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service

Safety Plan 2025 - 2028 Update Report

Report of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report is to update the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the delivery of the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan. The Safety Plan fulfils the legislative obligations to publish a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) as defined in the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England 2018.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Panel note the update on the delivery of the plan and make comment as appropriate.

3. Background

- 3.1. The National Framework requires each Fire and Rescue Service produce a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which must:
 - reflect up-to-date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks that could affect the area of the authority;
 - demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources;
 - outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
 - set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat;
 - cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework;

- reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners; and
- be easily accessible and publicly available.

3.2. The new CRMP 2025-2028 was published in December 2024 following an extensive period of consultation. It recognises the strategic priorities set out in the Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan 2024-2028 which in turn acknowledges the operational risks identified in the draft CRMP.

Please click [here](#) to read the CRMP 2025-2028 in full.

3.3. This report is based on the priorities set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan 2024-2028:

- An outstanding Fire & Rescue Service
- Preventing
- Protecting

4. An outstanding Fire & Rescue Service

4.1. In line with HMICFRS requirements, we now publish a summary of our progress against all its recommendations on our website which you can read by clicking **here**. We are also required to provide HMICFRS with a quarterly update on our progress against these recommendations which we upload to a dedicated secure portal.

4.2. **HMICFRS Inspection 2023-25: Effectiveness, Efficiency and People.** Progress has been made on the five Areas for Improvement (AFIs) from this inspection with one of the areas now considered to be addressed. All target delivery dates were initially set for 12 months following publication of the report. Now that the scope of the work is fully understood the target delivery dates for the AFIs have been revised to reflect more realistic goals.

Ref	Area for Improvement	Status	Target Delivery Date	Progress Notes
1	The service should make sure all staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people.	On Track	31/05/26	Following a review, all operational staff will now receive Level 2 safeguarding training, with regular refreshers. Training began in May 2025 and will run for approximately 12 months. Although the programme has been well received, operational pressures have caused a slower start. Of the 12 sessions held to date, six were completed successfully, while 6 were disrupted - resulting in a 50% disruption rate. So far, 47 personnel (9% of the total requirement) have completed the training. A further 58 sessions are planned over the next 10 months.

				<i>Completion of the training is expected by May 2026, at which point formal sign-off will be considered.</i>
2	The service should make sure it has an effective quality assurance process, so staff carry out audits to a consistent standard.	On Track	31/03/26	A review in January 2025 confirmed that the Quality Assurance (QA) Policy is both suitable and sufficient. Systems to support QA activity in place, with monthly reviews embedded within Protection Managers meetings. QA monitoring is a standing agenda item, and performance assessment is scheduled for June 2025. Due to delays in qualification validation, some anticipated sampling activity was not required, as affected individuals were not actively engaged in audits. At the close of the period, 9 qualified personnel were actively auditing. Each has been observed by their line manager, with feedback documented in line with QA procedures. The next six-month sampling window has now commenced, with an estimated 12 sampling activities expected. Annual internal monitoring remains scheduled for Q4 2025/26, and discussions are ongoing to arrange an external peer review with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service in the coming months. To fully evidence compliance with the QA policy, all required activities must be completed at least once. <i>This process will take over a year, with formal sign-off anticipated by March 2026.</i>
3	The service should make sure all staff understand the benefits of equality, diversity, inclusion and positive action and their role in promoting them.	On Track	31/12/26	An Equality Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) awareness presentation has been developed, with the service-wide launch in June 2025. The programme will run for 12–18 months as face-to-face sessions across the service. An initial session delivered to wholtime recruits in February 2025 was well received, and feedback has been used to enhance the content. Two sessions have been completed (Lichfield/Leek), with 13 more scheduled for the remainder of the year. Active Bystander training has also progressed, 44 staff members have completed the training so far. The training is expected to be delivered annually. <i>Anticipated that delivery to all wholtime and on-call will be complete by December 2026.</i>
4	The service should make sure it has robust processes in place to carry out equality impact assessments and review any actions agreed as a result.	Completed and signed off	17/09/25	This recommendation was signed off as complete at SDB 03/03/2025: - The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) training on Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) has now been completed, with nominated Champions across the service. - EqIA guidance and a 'How to' guide has been created and is available to all staff via SharePoint.
5	The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.	On Track	31/10/25	The research phase for Learning and Development (L&D), running from October 2024 to January 2025, is now complete. This included a review of NFCC guidance and best practices from other Fire and Rescue Services. A process and content document have been developed with input from HR and L&D, and

			consultation with representative bodies commenced. A meeting was held to discuss potential content providers. The consultation phase is now complete, and L&D is currently reviewing options for suitable training providers. This is expected to conclude July 2025. <i>A final check against the NFCC product is underway, with the training programme launch planned for October 2025.</i>
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4.3. Progress has been made on 15 recommendations from **HMICFRS Standards of Behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services** with 12 areas now considered as addressed.

Ref	Recommendation	Status	Target Delivery Date	Progress Notes
1	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should, as a priority, make sure their staff are aware of, and follow the Core Code of Ethics. FRSS should build the code into all relevant policies and practices.	Completed and signed off	01/02/2025	This recommendation was signed off as complete (<i>links to AFI 11 Round 2 inspection report</i>): The Core Code of Ethics (CCoE) is now embedded in all HR policies, with Principal Officers championing specific elements. A HIVE Survey (independent company) assesses employee understanding and sentiment, with plans for ongoing use. A Grievance/Disciplinary Tracker monitors trends to ensure alignment with CCoE. Daily conversations reinforce the expected values
2	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure a policy for probationary staff is in place. This policy should make clear that FRSS can immediately dismiss probationers who fail to meet the required standards of behaviour set out in the Core Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics fire standard.	Off Track	31/10/2025	Policies reviewed, and a standalone Probation Policy developed, aligning with updated legislation now expected in 2026. In the interim, probationary processes have been strengthened and guidance on effectively managing new recruits and probationers will be delivered. Further dialogue required between HR & FBU before this recommendation can be signed off. It is not considered ready to be regarded as Business as Usual (BAU). Further review has been carried out about the way we conduct Probationary reviews. Further training is needed to consolidate understanding of the process which is scheduled for Autumn for all Station Managers and equivalent. Supporting documentation is currently being developed. <i>Anticipated that this recommendation will be ready for sign-off as complete (BAU) by the end of October 2025.</i>
3	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their workforce plans allow staff to be moved from a wholetime watch to a different watch or station, within their contractual requirements, proactively and reactively as required.	Off Track	01/05/2025 (revised Target Date to be confirmed)	The service maintains an internal transfer process to support employees seeking moves between watches or stations, while retaining the ability to initiate moves to meet operational and organisational needs. Further dialogue planned between representative bodies and the Workforce Planning Board to clarify how the process operates in practice.

	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should also make sure firefighters who are promoted are posted to a different watch or station, including when the promotion is temporary for two months or more. If this is not possible, chief fire officers should show how the risks of reinforcing a negative culture have been addressed.			
4	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their FRS create or have access to a dedicated professional standards function to oversee the investigation of concerns raised within a service or from an external source. This should oversee cases to make sure they are investigated in a fair and transparent way, manage complex cases directly and act as a point of contact for all staff involved.	Completed and signed off	01/02/2025	The terms of reference have been developed in collaboration with our consultant and Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service, with consultant providing independence in the process. The Board members have been selected, and the first meeting to discuss the purpose and process took place in February. Future meetings have been scheduled to occur every six weeks, during which live cases will be reviewed by the Board.
5	By 1 November 2024, chief fire officers should make sure all staff understand how to raise a concern and use grievance and whistle-blowing processes. Chief fire officers should: •make sure staff know how FRSs will handle responses and maintain confidentiality and anonymity; and •explain how staff can access FRSs' whistle-blowing capability and the difference between whistle-blowing and other processes for raising concerns.	Completed and signed off	01/11/2024	Whistleblowing, Grievances, Say So, and HIVE details are now on the Staff Room intranet, with all policies accessible. An article in <i>Burning Issues</i> (internal publication) clarifies the differences between these terms. Further communication reinforces the confidentiality of HIVE/Say So. Terminology is now included in Middle Manager Training Modules to strengthen understanding.
6	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure a programme of training is in place for all supervisors and managers on how to manage staff performance and welfare and how to raise an issue. It should be supported by relevant policies and procedures. Training should include: •staff welfare and absence management; •the process for managing individual staff performance, addressing poor performance and potential misconduct issues;	Off Track	01/02/2025 (revised Target Date to be confirmed)	This area remains a work in progress, reflecting the complexity and scale of the task, as well as the diverse skills and needs across the service. Input has been sought from other FRSs to understand how they are addressing similar requirements. To support a more structured approach, a skills matrix and gap analysis is being considered. This will help identify priority areas and inform a more targeted training strategy aligned with the NFCC Leadership Framework. A training schedule has been developed by HR and will be delivered through Operational Forums, followed by two dedicated HR Training Days in September and October 2025. This schedule will be reviewed and refined following completion

	•how to handle difficult conversations and resolve issues informally, if appropriate, when a concern is identified; and •clarifying the role of HR services in helping managers to deal with staff concerns and misconduct issues. Chief fire officers should make sure all managers and supervisors attend the training programme.			of the skills matrix. An update paper was presented to SDB on 3 March 2025. As the training programme had not yet commenced, this area was not yet considered ready for business-as-usual status. In the interim: • Welfare Officer training has been delivered to managers to support staff involved in employee relations processes. • Capability management - covering absence and performance - will be addressed through upcoming Operational Forums and Middle Management training sessions, with delivery aligned to the completion of relevant policies.
7	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should make sure the policies and processes for misconduct are consistent for all staff and are fairly applied within their respective conditions of employment. By 1 August 2025, the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services and the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, supported by NFCC, should make misconduct processes consistent for all staff irrespective of the terms and conditions of their employment.	Completed and signed off	01/05/2025	The HR Tracker, which has been verified by an external consultant, will continue to be used to ensure consistency across cases and to manage their completion in a prompt manner. It will also be reviewed by the Professional Standards Board, which will provide feedback to drive improvements. All policies related to misconduct are aligned with the ACAS Code of Practice, and when reviewed, they adhere to this guidance. Unions have been consulted throughout the process.
8	By 1 November 2024, chief fire officers should make sure all allegations of misconduct are handled in a consistent way and staff have confidence in misconduct processes. Chief fire officers should carry out a full review of the processes, from initial identification of a misconduct issue through to the resolution or outcome. This should include a review of how FRSs: •monitor and manage investigations; •maintain accurate records; and •adhere to required timescales.	Completed and signed off	01/11/2024	Misconduct process under continuous review, incorporating findings from the thematic report. Key changes include an appeals panel, external investigators when needed, and improved record-keeping. Consultation with unions is ongoing: • Investigations: Managers assess misconduct with HR support, with complex cases referred for external advice. A new supervisory training course includes sessions with an employment lawyer. • Record-Keeping: Cases are tracked in an HR system and stored in employee files for oversight. • Timescales: HR monitors cases weekly, adjusting timelines when necessary while aiming to meet policy deadlines.
9	By 1 August 2025, chief fire officers should introduce a case management system if they do not already have one. The case management system should allow data to be produced that will help	Completed and signed off	01/08/2025	The HR department has been using a tracking sheet for several years, which has now been significantly enhanced and improved. • Cases are reviewed weekly. • Trends are monitored. • Themes are reported quarterly.

	them to better understand and oversee misconduct cases in their services.			An independent consultant reviewed the Tracker and provided recommendations on how it could be improved. These recommendations have been incorporated into the process. Given the current financial constraints, our recommendation is to continue using the current method of review without incurring any other costs.
10	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their FRSs have enough capacity to carry out their misconduct investigations. They should consider using external investigators or a similar independent resource to support the process if required.	Completed and signed off	10/05/2025	In 2024, consideration was given to using an independent investigator within the service to review cases, with the aim to: • Provide independence • Enhance speed • Offer a learning opportunity. Two different independent approaches were trialled, with varying degrees of success. The outcome was that one of the providers delivered an excellent service, while the other failed to meet acceptable standards. This can be utilised as needed.
11	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should review the training their FRSs provide for supervisors and managers who investigate misconduct issues at all levels. Chief fire officers should make sure: •all staff who carry out investigations receive adequate training to carry out the task; •a programme of refresher training and ongoing support is available so that staff can maintain a level of competence; and •it is clear how services' HR provision, staff associations and any trade union representative or fellow employee will support the investigation process.	Completed and signed off	01/05/2025	Training for Investigation Officers with Employment Consultant, which was previously conducted on an ad hoc basis, is now mandatory within the Middle Management Training programme. This training runs annually, with non-operational fire staff also invited to attend. HR Officers work closely with all Investigating Officers to ensure consistency and provide supportive feedback throughout the process, aiming to improve the quality of investigation reports. Professional Standards Boards (Recommendation 04) will be used to review all drafted investigation reports, offering learning opportunities and ensuring quality assurance. Training on the production of written reports will be provided during the HR Training Day, including the introduction of new templates to streamline processes where appropriate. A list of all trained investigators has been created to ensure a fair distribution of cases. The investigation process is clearly defined within the Disciplinary process which is found on our staff intranet.
12	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should make sure all staff are aware of the welfare support, including occupational health support, that is available to staff involved in misconduct processes. Chief fire officers should encourage all staff involved in misconduct processes to access this support, whether they are an alleged perpetrator, complainant, witness, investigator or decision-	Completed and signed off	01/11/2024	Welfare support now formally offered to all involved in investigations, including witnesses, interviewers, and those at the centre of allegations. Key Updates: • HR has been briefed in weekly meetings. • Welfare support is now included in all investigation, grievance, and disciplinary documents. • Training with Occupational Health will be rolled out to all Support Officers. The Disciplinary Policy has been updated to reflect this provision.

	maker. Welfare personnel should be independent of the investigation and have been appropriately trained for this role.			
13	By 1 November 2024, fire and rescue authorities and chief fire officers should consider varying the approach to hearing appeals so that appeals for complex or serious cases are heard by a panel rather than one person. By 1 February 2025, fire and rescue authorities and chief fire officers should make sure all FRS managers and members of fire and rescue authorities who hear appeals receive appropriate training. Chief fire officers should make sure FRSs have a consistent approach to hearing appeals.	Completed and signed off	01/11/2024	The Disciplinary Policy now allows independent personnel from the Commissioner's Office on the Appeals Panel if needed. External legal training has been provided to independent panel members for consistency and effectiveness. The HR Team has been briefed on this change.
14	By 1 November 2025, chief fire officers should implement a process that makes sure they can oversee and scrutinise their FRS's performance relating to misconduct issues. This process should provide: •a strategic overview of performance and analysis of trends, including disproportionality; •regular reporting of issues, outcomes and trends to the fire and rescue authority; and •identification of learning outcomes and how they will be shared with FRS staff, to prevent repeat behaviours.	Completed and signed off	01/11/2025	Performance is tracked through public performance meetings, internal governance board reports, and the HR tracker. The HR Manager also reports on it during senior leadership team performance meetings.
15	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should put in place a process for sharing learning from misconduct cases that have been resolved while preserving the confidentiality of all parties involved. Any learning should feed into the national system, when established. By 1 May 2025, NFCC should establish a system for sharing learning from more serious cases of misconduct with FRS staff. The information shared should preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of all parties involved. The	Completed and signed off	01/02/2025	<i>Links to Recommendation 11</i> - HR Training will serve as the forum for sharing case learnings, with plans to make this an annual event. Sharing cases more often than annually may risk compromising confidentiality.

	College of Fire and Rescue, once it is established, should take responsibility for maintaining this system.			
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4.4. Earlier in the year, HMICFRS published its [2025-27 Fire and Rescue Service inspection programme and framework](#) which will include greater focus on:

- How well FRSs lead their people, including leaders at all levels of the organisation
- Building on the important work done to improve values and culture
- Understanding and evaluating how each FRS is affected by its Fire and Rescue Authorities governance, oversight and scrutiny arrangements (in our case the impact of the Commissioner's governance on the way we deliver our services)

4.5. Changes to the inspection methodology include:

- Reduction in principal questions from 11 to 10 (Characteristics of "Good")
- Inclusion of financial, geographic, and demographic context on circumstances in which FRSs deliver in reports.
- New inspection activities include: interviews with audit committee, trade union and leadership focus groups, and desktop reviews on leadership, communications, and misconduct.
- The Commissioner's office will not be directly inspected but the review will consider the impact of its governance on the service.
- Emphasis on internal governance: scrutiny arrangements, delegation schemes, and reporting to the Commissioner's office.
- No formal ratings or direct recommendations will be issued.

4.6. **Key Lines of Enquiry** (Characteristics of Good). In terms of Effectiveness and Efficiency governance should ensure robust financial oversight, strategic risk management, and performance monitoring. For People we need to be able to demonstrate that culture, wellbeing, and staff feedback mechanisms are supported.

Effectiveness: HMICFRS will:

- Assess how well the FRS understands and manages fire and emergency risks.
- examine whether governance supports local risk awareness and helps shape service priorities.
- will comment on the quality and consistency of updates provided to the Commissioner on prevention, protection, and response activities.

Efficiency: HMICFRS will:

- Assesses how well resources are used to manage risk.
- Evaluate strategic oversight of management and internal controls.

- Review how senior officers are held accountable through scheme of delegation.

People: HMICFRS will:

- Assess how well the FRS promotes a positive culture and supports staff wellbeing.
- Review governance oversight of people strategies and conduct.
- Evaluate systems for feedback, complaints, and grievances.
- Check if the Commissioner receives regular updates on people issues.

- 4.7. In addition to documents requested in previous inspection rounds. HMICFRS will want to see:
 - Policies on leadership, recruitment, complaints, and misconduct.
 - Governance meeting minutes, budget reports, and project documentation.
 - Specific project documents
- 4.8. New or refined activities will include:
 - Discipline & Grievance Review
 - Communications & Engagement Review
 - Recruitment and promotion processes.
 - Leadership Review
 - Major Incident Desktop Review
 - Leadership Focus Group
- 4.9. A data collection exercise ran from 22 April to 30 May 2025, however, HMICFRS may request additional data in autumn if needed to support the likes of thematic inspections or lines of enquiry.
- 4.10. The 2025-27 inspections timetable has been released with the inspection dates for the first 14 FRSs confirmed. Staffordshire's inspection date is yet to be confirmed but based the dates already confirmed for other services we do not expect this to be before May 2026.
- 4.11. Over the coming months we will work to prepare managers, crews and teams for our inspection so that they aware of what is expected from them and to answer any queries they may have as best we can.
- 4.12. His Majesty's Chief Inspector Sir Andy Cooke's annual assessment of FRSs, the State of Fire and Rescue report will be published later this Autumn.
- 4.13. The Service is undergoing a multi-phase **Transformation Programme** to meet financial sustainability targets set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Following the successful completion of Phase 1, which delivered substantial recurring savings, the focus has shifted to the implementation of Phase 2 initiatives. This includes the identification and

delivery of additional transformation options required to secure the required savings from 2025 onwards.

- 4.14. Phase 1 Transformation Achievements (2022–2025). Total Recurring Savings Achieved: £1,300,000. Phase 1 was delivered successfully, meeting targets through a combination of:
- Workforce efficiencies with savings made from reducing wholetime crewing figures and reviews of prevention and protection staff.
 - Process improvements around operational crewing and training.
 - Strategic project completions which have seen investments in the On-call service and procurement of new innovative appliances.
- 4.15. Phase 2 – (2025–2029). New Savings Target: £1,000,000 (recurring), by the end of financial year 2028/29. This target aligns with the ongoing commitments in the MTFs. Declared savings to date for 2025/26 are £500,000, made up of the removal of a project Manager role, the re-alignment of a fire engineer role, HR Restructure, the closure of the community Sprinkler project, MRP savings from the year end position and additional income from the Unitary Charge and water rebates. £500,000 savings remain to be delivered, however, the £1 million target was planned to be delivered incrementally by 2028/29, with only £400,000 expected in 2025/26. Early delivery of any additional savings will accelerate progress toward this goal.
- 4.16. Other key transformation developments include:
- ICT Investments: Continued development and optimisation of ICT systems to enhance efficiency and enable smarter working practices.
 - Environmental and Sustainability Strategy work towards long-term sustainability goals.
 - Ongoing work on clean concept initiatives to minimise the risk from contaminants and protect operational staff.
- 4.17. Additional Workstreams under Phase 2
- Administration Review
 - Focus: Streamlining and standardising administrative functions within Service Delivery Groups.
 - Alignment: Integration with ICT optimisation and automation.
 - Estimated Savings: £100,000.
 - Status: Approved by the Service Management Board; currently in consultation with implementation scheduled for Autumn 2025.
 - Other Identified Workstreams
 - Revenue Review – Vacancy Controls: £100,000.
 - Estates Sharing & Stafford Disposal: £100,000 (plus a £600,000 capital receipt phased over several years).
- 4.18. This leaves a gap of £200,000 which will need to be found through other workstreams. Additional transformation opportunities are being explored to

bridge this gap.

- 4.19. **FRS Comprehensive Spending Review 2026-2029 (Fair Funding Formula review).** The Service is now assessing the Government's first release of the Fair Funding Formula which will be used as the basis for the three-year Comprehensive Spending Review for Fire and Rescue Services. This will form the basis of a consultation response and further work with the National Fire Chief's Council in response to the Government's proposals. Initial exploration of the model highlights significant inequality between Services and the formula is linked with assumed notional council tax levels over the three period. For Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, the funding allocations, if unchanged, will significantly add to the savings required by the current Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 4.20. The average total **Service availability** across Q1 2025/26 is 64.55% compared with 66.71% for the same period last year. The average On Call appliance availability across Q1 2025/26 is 53.85% compared with 56.64% for the same period last year.
- 4.21. Availability has stabilised through the last quarter and continues the trend from the previous 12 months with a reduction during the summer months. Our next area of improvement work will focus on increasing the quantity of fire appliances during periods of higher demand.
- 4.22. The Service Attendance Standard is based upon the first pump appliance attending Primary/Secondary fires and Special Service Calls within 8 minutes to a high-risk area, 10 minutes to a medium risk area, and 18 minutes to a low risk area. The target set for attendance is that 80% of the time this will be achieved. In Q1 of 2025/26 the attendance standard was achieved on 77.67% of occasions, however, in July 2025 it was achieved on 81% of occasions.
- 4.23. The average attendance standard for Q1 2024/25 was 83.3% however, the total number of attended incidents for the most recent quarter is 25.9% higher than those recorded in Q1 2024/25.
- 4.24. Our **Falls Response Service** has continued throughout 2024 and is currently funded until December 2025. Since its launch, the team has responded to 2,622 calls, as of 30 June 2025; averaging three callouts a day. Based in Lichfield, the team is mobilised by the NHS Integrated Care Coordination (ICC) team, responding to 'Green' category non-injury falls, where patients simply need assistance to get up. All calls are triaged by the ICC to ensure they are appropriate for the Falls Team response before dispatch.
- 4.25. In the last quarter, the Falls Response Team was mobilised on 291 occasions, being stood down prior to arrival on 19 occasions. Despite covering the whole of Staffordshire (112 mobilisations in the East, 85 in the

West and 75 in the North of the county) the Falls Team maintains an impressive average response time of 37 minutes. The team maintained a strong performance, achieving the required two-hour attendance target in 99% of cases. 92% of incidents took place in domestic dwellings, while the remaining 8% occurred in care settings. In 86% of cases, they were able to assist patients without the need for further NHS urgent care involvement. Where additional medical support is required, the team liaise with the ICC to arrange appropriate care. 94% of patients are aged 60 or over, however we offer a Home Fire Safety Visit to every patient we attend. In the last quarter alone, 165 Home Fire Safety Visits were completed as a direct result of this commissioned work.

- 4.26. Over the next reporting period, we are committed to working in partnership with the ICC and fully support their request to expand the scope of the Falls Team's responsibilities. In line with this, we are actively progressing work to enable the Falls Team to respond to 'Failed Contact' incidents. This development aims to further reduce demand on WMAS and the ICC while capturing and recording positive outcomes for patients.
- 4.27. The Home from Hospital pilot commenced on 4 December 2023 and was initially scheduled to run until the end of March 2024. However, due to its success and positive impact, the initiative has secured extended funding and will now continue until 31 March 2026.
- 4.28. This service provides discharge and "settle-in" support for patients identified by the Integrated Discharge Hub (IDH) and operates from multiple wards within Royal Stoke Hospital. In response to increasing demand and in line with the established Falls Team model, the team was expanded to six personnel last year. This increase has significantly enhanced capacity and resilience across the Fire and Health Partnership Teams.
- 4.29. As of 30 June 2025, the team has supported the safe discharge of 2,603 patients across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, averaging 5 to 6 discharges a day. The team successfully completed 98% of these jobs without any issues. During this quarter, a total of 536 mobilisations were recorded; of these, 26 were stood down. The Discharge and Settle-in Service accounted for 330 mobilisations, while 180 involved other activities, predominantly the installation of safety equipment. Additionally, these mobilisations resulted in 339 Home Fire Safety Visits, reinforcing our commitment to utilise this partnership to promote home fire safety and prevention across our communities.
- 4.30. Notably, of all patients discharged through the initiative to date, there has been only one readmission within 24 hours - an outcome aligned with the NHS's key performance measure for this type of service.
- 4.31. We continue to work closely with the IDH to explore options for increasing coverage which aligns with the discharge service schedule, aiming to

increase capacity and deliver a more consistent service that meets the needs of all stakeholders.

5. Preventing

5.1. 7,685 **Safe and Well Visits** and 681 Extended Visits were undertaken in the last six months. Extended visits are carried out after an initial Safe and Well Visit has taken place or when the information provided requesting a visit has suggested a greater deal of support and advice for the resident is required. It is at these visits where further intervention measures including the provision of additional safety equipment such as fire-retardant bedding and smokers' bins are provided. Prevent Teams will also signpost people to partners for additional support e.g. requesting an Assessment of Needs for the resident or may request hard of hearing equipment is fitted. The service will be transitioning from Safe and Well Visits to Home Fire Safety Visits and introducing a Person-Centred Framework shortly.

5.2. A total of 21 referrals requesting **Fire Safety Intervention** were received.

5.3. A **Road Safety Delivery Plan** is being developed providing information and outlining the key areas that the service will focus on, as below:

Priority Road User Groups: -

- Children under 16 in schools
- Pre/young drivers
- Motorcyclists
- Pedal Cyclists
- Pedestrians
- Mature Drivers
- Drivers – Work Related Road Risk

Higher Risk Groups

- Children with Special Education Needs Disability (SEND) and Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)
- Military Personnel

5.4. A brief to cover Road Safety will be included in the suite of options for community engagement. This will provide staff with key messages for discussion, an example being Vehicle Checks, where the following will be discussed:

- Vehicle defects have been found to contribute to nearly 500 people being killed or seriously injured on UK roads every year.
- Common vehicle defects can result in a fine and three points on a driver's licence. For example, driving with a tyre with less than minimum tread depth may result in a £2,500 fine and 3 points per defective tyre. Defects with tyres and lights are a significant cause of MOT failures.

- Conducting regular vehicle checks can therefore help to keep you, your passengers and other road users safe. Checks help you maintain your vehicle in good condition and can save you money.
- Checks are easy and quick to do. The AutoNinja sheet guides you through what needs to be checked and how to do it if you are unsure. The QR codes take you to short clips.
- Conducting checks regularly is advised – at least once a month and before any long trips. Linking the checks to a regular activity such as washing your car can help remind you to do it.

5.5. The mature drivers pilot will commence in July 2025. Safe and Well Technicians will discuss key messages if there is a driver in the household, 65+ who is willing to participate in the pilot and receptive to receiving the safety advice.

5.6. The Education Delivery Workplan is a two-year plan for academic years 24/25 and 25/26.

Target Audience	Education Delivery Offer	Topics covered during visit
Early Years	Universal Offer	'Big Red Fire Service Boxes' -packed with information, resources, fun and games for younger children. Loaned out to settings free of charge. To borrow a Red Box email sdgroomenquiries@staffordshirefire.gov.uk The boxes can be loaned for up to three weeks.
Key Stage 1, Years 1 and 2, ages 5-7	KS1 Year 1 – Road safety	Road Safety (Year 1) Pedestrian safety, restraints Developed by SSRP – targeted delivery to schools ranked by SSRP, those ranked 100 and over are targeted if they are in turnout area of wholetime station
	KS1 Year 2 – Fire safety	Fire Safety (Year 2) (developed by PSHE Leads) offered to all schools within turnout area of wholetime stations
	Universal Offer – KS1	www.staywise.co.uk Resources for teachers provided by emergency services nationally
	Universal Offer – Ages 4-8	https://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/your-safety/welephant-club/ The Welephant Club is available for 4-8-year olds to find out more about fire safety, water safety and road safety
Key Stage 2, Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, ages 7-11	Universal Offer – all Year 5s	Safe+Sound at Fire Stations
	Universal Offer – KS2	Safe+Sound weekly on-line programme www.learnliveuk.com/safesound
	Universal Offer – KS2	www.staywise.co.uk Resources for teachers provided by emergency services nationally
	Universal Offer – Ages 4-8	https://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/your-safety/welephant-club/ The Welephant Club is available for 4-8-year olds to find out more about fire safety, water safety and road safety
Key Stage 3, Years 7-9, age 11 - 14	KS3/4 – Fire Safety, Water Safety, Deliberate Fires	Delivered on a locally identified needs basis.
	Universal Offer – KS3	www.staywise.co.uk Resources for teachers provided by emergency services nationally

Key Stage 4, Year 10 and 11, ages 14-16	KS3/4 – Fire Safety, Water Safety, Deliberate Fires	Delivered on a locally identified needs basis.
	Universal Offer – KS4	www.staywise.co.uk Resources for teachers provided by emergency services nationally
Key Stage 5 Uniformed Public Service Courses Age 16+	Universal Offer – any UPS course	Working in the Fire Service Presentation by Station Manager or representative
	Universal Offer – any UPS Course	Station Visit to include Table top exercise and station tour
	Universal Offer – all UPS students	Half day annual event at SFRS HQ

5.7. During the academic year 24/25 the following educational visits were carried out:

Package	Number of sessions delivered
Key Stage 1 Year 1 Road safety	111
Key Stage 1 Year 2 Fire Safety	199
Key Stage 3/4 Deliberate Fires	1
UPS Table top Exercise and Station Tour	3
UPS SM Presentation	2
Other delivery not included on EDP	119
Total Sessions delivered	435

5.8. Feedback from schools has been positive:

- They loved everything! The crew were very kind and patient with all the questions, and let the children use the hose which was the favourite part.
- The session was broken up into different elements, which kept the children engaged throughout. They loved the dressing up part and they really enjoyed finding the fire hazards in the picture.
- Each child wrote a letter to the fire station. Their favourite parts were sitting in the fire engine, the siren and learning to stop, drop and roll.
- The recent visit from the local fire service to our Year 1 class was a fantastic experience for the children. The firefighters were engaging, friendly, and did an excellent job of making the session both educational and fun.
- All the children really enjoyed the different activities to learn about fire safety. It was useful how they were able to go in to smaller groups too then come back together as a whole class.
- The children really enjoyed the visit and were able to use what they had learnt in our PSHE lessons about keeping safe to identify the hazards, etc. Session well matched the KS1 curriculum

5.9. We also asked 'Have the children/young people demonstrated any positive change in behaviours since the session';

- They are going to learn their home address and carry out a fire safety survey at home over half term.
- Children are talking about hazards more and are more able to identify them in the home.

- They have talked about walking to school safely.
- One boy had gone around his home doing a 'hazard check'.
- Tell my mum to switch off her hair straighteners and not put them on the bed.
- Check the plugs aren't overloaded.
- Talked to parents. Checked car seats. Bought reflectors. Told me that they were now walking on the correct side of the pavement - making more conscious decisions about road safety.

5.10. **Safe+Sound** has completed delivery for academic year 24/25, and the delivery timetable for 25/26 is in place, with schools already booking.

5.11. Year 5 children from all mainstream schools are invited including many SEND settings. SEND settings send a variety of age children whose learning is at Year 5 level so that they are able to participate and get the most out of the workshops available.

5.12. Partners engaged in delivery include St John Ambulance, HSBC Bank, Canal and River Trust, RNLI, DHL, Wincanton, Network Rail, Staffordshire Police and the Community Drug and Alcohol Service.

5.13. Delivery locations, dates, numbers and percentages of schools attending can be seen below:

Location (Fire Stations unless otherwise stated)	24/25	No of schools invited	No of schools attending	% of schools attending	No of children attending
Stone	11 to 13 September 2024	7	5	71	346
Lichfield	18 to 25 September 2024	16	11	67	415
Tamworth	3 October to 16 October 2024	30	18	60	617
Chase Terrace	18 to 22 October 2024	11	8	73	305
Burton	4 to 12 Nov 2024	26	13	50	672
Leek	14 to 22 November 2024	21	12	57	533
Biddulph	3 to 5 Dec 2024	4	2	50	211
Rugeley	10 to 12 December 2024	14	9	64	252
Penkridge	8 to 16 Jan 2025	13	4	31	288
Stafford	21 to 30 Jan 2025	35	16	46	616
Sandyford	4 March to 20 March 2025	44	23	52	1028
Cannock	29 April to 14 May 2025	23	13	57	594
Uttoxeter – JCB Global Learning	20 to 22 May 2025	4	3	75	211
Newcastle	2 to 16 June 2025	39	25	64	807
Wombourne	18 to 19 June 2025	9	5	56	105

Longton	24 June to 11 July 2025	39	19	49	990
TOTAL	2024/2025	335	186	55.5%	7990
	2023/2024			52%	7557

- 5.14. An Intern from Staffordshire University is completing an academic evaluation of this year's Safe+Sound live delivery.
- 5.15. The plan for 25/26 is to make contact and invite Home Educated Families to attend special Safe+Sound events designed for a variety of children and their responsible adults to attend.
- 5.16. Online delivery of Safe+Sound on the Learn Live Channel continues with a weekly programme every Wednesday during term time. Up to end June 2025:
- 546,279 devices watched the programme live
 - 252,609 were Staffordshire devices
 - 130,363 devices viewed on demand up to May half term
 - The average number of live weekly views is 16,067, an increase from 12,641 last year.
- 5.17. Partners involved in content of the weekly programmes include SFRS, Staffordshire Police, RNLI, Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership, HMB Training, Calm Careers, Stop Loan Sharks, Violence Reduction Alliance and many more. In 25/26 the plan is to develop more partner links and refresh some of the existing content.
- 5.18. In partnership with Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) we delivered 5 half-day **Young Driver Safe+Sound events** in locations identified as having young people in the community at higher risk of being involved in a collision. Local schools, colleges and apprentice centres have been engaged with to identify young people intending to learn to drive, already learning or recently passed their test.

Venue	Burton	Sandyford	Cannock	JCB	Newcastle
Date	6 Nov 2024	Thurs 13 March 2025	Tues 13 May 2025	Fri 23 May 2025	Tues 3 June 2025
Hazard perception	SSRP	SSRP/SFRS	SFRS	SFRS	SFRS
Vehicle checks and motorway driving	National Highways	National Highways	National Highways	National Highways	National Highways
None for the Road: drink and drugs	Staffs County Council	Staffordshire Police	Staffs County Council	Staffs County Council	SSRP
HGV safety	Wincanton	Wincanton	Wincanton	Wincanton	Wincanton
Audience	Burton College	Crossway Academy and City College -	Cannock College and Hednesford Valley high	JCB Academy plus JCB apprentices	Newcastle College.

Numbers attending	40	14	25	44	45
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5.19. The events use different learning styles to reinforce positive behaviours and provide education and training on topics which would be difficult to deliver in other settings. Workshops included what to do in a road emergency, driver-hazard perception, basic vehicle maintenance, driver impairment and HGV awareness.

5.20. **Safe+Sound Careers events** have been introduced in 3 pilot locations. Schools/Colleges were invited to attend by the Positive Action Officer. Four workshops were delivered, aiming to demonstrate the variety of roles available within the Fire Service, whilst also showcasing the role of the Firefighter. Feedback has been positive for the three pilot events and it is hoped that delivery will become business as usual alongside the Young Driver events across the County.

Location	Date	Audience	Numbers attending
Cannock	13.5.25	Chase Terrace Academy, Cannock Chase High School, Staffordshire University Academy	36
Newcastle	3.6.25	Stoke 6 th Form, Christ Church Academy, Sporting Stars Alternative Provision	35
Longton	3.7.25	Biddulph High School	48

5.21. Of the 45 feedback forms submitted 8 were already considering a career in the Fire Service and the event reinforced their intention, and 19 said they hadn't considered the Fire Service as a career until now. 18 said they weren't now considering a career in the fire service, reasons cited being:

- Already planning a different career
- I wanted to before but realising the amount of risk and the tight spaces put me off

5.22. 253 students from Stafford, Newcastle, South Staffordshire, Burton & South Derbyshire and Stoke-on-Trent Colleges attended a **Uniformed Public Services Event** at HQ. Buxton and Leek College didn't respond to the invitation, and Stoke 6th Form College no longer deliver UPS courses. Tutors fed back that:

- Staff very welcoming, including helpers and happy to answer any questions
- Students loved the environment & how professional staff were - used words like role models & inspirational. Loved the RTC & Retained FF element.
- Students mentioned that they would like more information on the smoke house and an opportunity to go on an appliance.
- Students asked how they can apply for the operational role/apprenticeship or none operational role.

5.23. We asked the students who responded with feedback 'Are you considering a role in the Fire Service'

- 10 answered 'Yes, I was already planning to prior to attending' (15%)

- 9 said 'Yes, today has changed my plan' (13.5%)
- 16 said 'No' (24%)
- 31 said 'Maybe' (46.5%)

5.24. During the first six months of 2025, 109 requests were received for volunteers and a total of 2,339 volunteer hours were given during the period. examples of engagement include:

- Support with delivery of a 3-pump exercises - Operational Assurance providing casualties that were used to deliver a realistic scenario for operational crews and new recruits
- Volunteers supporting various station charity car washes across the county
- Support with hosting and delivering at Safe+Sound events across the County
- Continued support for all operational and support staff by our Chaplains
- Educational visits to stations for local Beavers, Cubs and Brownies groups
- Supporting the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership with community speed watch
- Supporting our Community Engagement Officer with local events
- Supporting various Station Open Days across the county
- Supporting production of Safe+Sound programmes for the online weekly programme
- Helping to maintain and upkeep the Memorial Garden and other areas at HQ
- Local community events with Crews i.e. Pride, County Show, Emergency Services Day
- Supporting SFRS Welephant club with Admin
- Supporting with Post Incident administration
- Supporting with on call recruitment drives
- Community Brew with the crew

6. Protecting

6.1. Since the introduction of a new **Risk Based Inspection Programme** (RBIP) in February 2024 the Service has seen a sharp increase in the number of Fire Safety Audits carried out. The RBIP is the primary method the Service uses to prioritise risk for premises covered by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This impacts on the premises proactively chosen for fire safety audits by Protection Teams, but also the role operational crews take to ensure its full effectiveness. Premises deemed very high and high risk (based on national best practice methodology) receive a full fire safety audit by a specialist Fire Protection Inspecting Officer. A selection of premises deemed medium, low and very low risk receive a compliance check visit by a suitably qualified (Level 2 award in fire safety checks) operational crew with any serious issues referred to the relevant Protection Team. To date 145 Compliance Checks have been

completed by operational crews.

- 6.2. Between February and July 2025, the service carried out 219 fire safety audits, the vast majority of which were in high and very high-risk premises. As a result of these audits 3 Prohibition Notices and 5 Enforcement Notices have been served. In terms of compliance with the RBIP, of the premises which should have been visited in that timeframe, 98% now have been visited. In the same period 309 Building Regulation Consultations were received of which 96% were responded to within 15 days.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The Police, Fire and Crime Panel will continue to receive updates in line with their proposed work plan for the coming year and as requested.

Ben Adams
Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

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Report to the Police Fire and Crime Panel**17 November 2025****Statement of Assurance 2024/25**

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

Introduction

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out a requirement for fire and rescue authorities to publish Statements of Assurance.

It says: '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'.

Fire and rescue authorities are accountable for their performance and should be open to evaluation by the communities they serve. Information on their performance should be accessible, robust, fit-for-purpose and accurately report on effectiveness and value for money.

One of the principal aims of the statement of assurance is to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance

The Statement of Assurance covers the full year period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

Recommendations

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is asked to note the information contained within the enclosed Statement of Assurance.

For the Panel to note that approval for the publication of the Statement of Assurance was provided by the Strategic Governance Board on 23 October 2025.

Ben Adams**Staffordshire Commissioner**



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

Statement of Assurance

2024/25



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Polish

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Romanian

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Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کی کسی متبادل شکل یا زبان میں ترجمہ کی ضرورت ہے، تو براہ کرم ہم سے رابطہ کریں تاکہ ہم آپ کی درخواست پر غور کر سکیں۔

Punjabi

جے تہانوں ایس لکھت دی سی ہو ر شکل یا زبان وچ لوڈا اے تے مہربانی کر کے ساڈے نال رابطہ کرو تاں جے اسی تہاڈی درخواست تے غور کر سکئے۔

Hungarian

Amennyiben a dokumentum más formátumú vagy nyelvű változatára van szüksége, kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, hogy megbeszéljük a kérését.

Arabic

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى نسخة من هذا المستند بتنسيق أو لغة بديلة ، فيرجى الاتصال بنا حتى نتمكن من النظر في طلبك.

Kurdish

ئەگەر پێویستت بە وەشانێکی ئەم بەلگەنامەیە هەیە بە فورمات یان زمانێکی جیاواز تەکایە پەیوەندیمان پێوە بکە بۆ ئەوەی بتوانین داواکارییەکەت ڕەچاو بکەین.

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Malayalam

നിങ്ങൾക്ക് ഈ പ്രമാണത്തിന്റെ ഒരു പതിപ്പ് മറ്റൊരു രൂപത്തിലോ ഭാഷയിലോ ആവശ്യമാണെങ്കിൽ, ദയവായി ഞങ്ങളെ ബന്ധപ്പെടുക അതുവഴി നിങ്ങളുടെ ആവശ്യം ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് പരിഗണിക്കാൻ കഴിയും.

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0300 330 1000



WELCOME TO THE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

As we reflect on the year from April 2024 to March 2025, it is clear that everyone at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has continued to deliver with professionalism, compassion and resilience - despite the unpredictable weather and growing demands on our teams.

This year marked a major milestone as we celebrated our 50th anniversary as a Fire and Rescue Service. Events like the Retired Network gathering reminded us of the strong foundations laid by those who came before us and how their legacy continues to shape the work we do today.

Fundraising: A Community Effort

Our community spirit shone through in our fundraising efforts, with teams and supporters across Staffordshire smashing our '£50k challenge' target and raising an incredible £54,280 for The Fire Fighters Charity. From bake sales to open days, every event helps support the wellbeing of firefighters and their families. Thank you - your efforts truly made a difference.

HMICFRS Inspection: A Proud Moment

One of the standout moments of the year was the outcome of the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection. Our Service was rated *Outstanding* for its response to major and multi-agency incidents - an achievement that highlights the unwavering commitment and expertise of our workforce.

The inspection also acknowledged significant progress across 11 key areas. Our collaborative work with the Civil Contingencies Unit and the NHS - the Falls Response and Home from Hospital services - was highlighted as *promising practice*. These results are a testament to the skill, dedication, and professionalism of our staff.

A New Chapter: From Safety Plan 2020-24 to CRMP Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-28

This year also marked the conclusion of our [Safety Plan 2020-24](#), which has guided our priorities and service delivery over the past four years and the successful transition to our new [CRMP 2025-28](#)

The CRMP builds on the successes of the Safety Plan and reflects the changing risks and needs of our communities. Informed by public consultation and data, it sets out how we will continue to prevent incidents, protect people and property and respond effectively to emergencies - while ensuring value for money and sustainability.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the next chapter of our journey, we remain focused on delivering a modern, efficient and community-focused service. Whether through our CRMP, our wellbeing initiatives, or our continued investment in people and places, we are committed to keeping Staffordshire safe.

Thank You

To all our staff and volunteers. Your dedication, compassion and professionalism continue to make a lasting impact across Staffordshire. Together, we can make Staffordshire even safer.

And thank you also for taking the time to read our Statement of Assurance. We hope it not only gives you a flavour of what we do, but also who we are - people committed to protecting and supporting our communities every day.



Rob Barber

Chief Fire Officer

GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE

What is a Statement of Assurance?

Each year we publish a Statement of Assurance to show how we are meeting our responsibilities under the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#). It is our way of being open and honest with our staff, partners and the public.

This year's statement covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and includes details about:

- How we manage our money and make decisions
- How we respond to emergencies and help reduce risks
- What progress we have made on our key priorities
- How we are preparing for future challenges

We also use this report to talk about wider issues that affect our work - like climate change, extreme weather, new technology and pressures on public services. It is all part of keeping you informed about how we are adapting and planning ahead.

This statement follows the latest guidance from the [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#) and the [Home Office](#) and includes links to key documents for anyone who wants to find out more.

Scope of Responsibility - Since 1 August 2018, the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime (the Commissioner) has been in charge of making sure both Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service work well for local communities.

The Commissioner is elected by the public and focuses on making sure these services are efficient, effective, and meet the needs of the people. While they do not manage daily operations, they do hold the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer responsible for delivering high-quality services. They also deal with complaints and conduct issues involving senior officers.

As the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Commissioner sets the overall direction for the Fire and Rescue Service through a strategic plan – [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) - approves budgets and works with councils, health services and other partners to help keep Staffordshire safe and improve wellbeing.

Continuous Improvement, Good Governance and Performance - The Commissioner ensures that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service is always working to improve, in line with national standards. This includes using public money wisely, delivering services efficiently and managing risks effectively.

To support this, strong governance systems are in place - such as regular performance reviews, financial oversight and public meetings - to make sure the Service remains transparent and accountable.

The Commissioner also plays a key role in monitoring how well we perform and ensure we continue to deliver high-quality services for local communities.

As part of ongoing improvements, we will be delivering our [Productivity and Efficiency Plan](#) for 2025/26, which focuses on:

- Making better use of staff, equipment and buildings
- Investing in new technology to support emergency services
- Reviewing financial plans to ensure long-term sustainability

These efforts help us do more for the people of Staffordshire while keeping costs under control.

How We Monitor Performance - We regularly check how well we are performing to make sure we are meeting our goals and serving our communities effectively.

Senior leaders use a Performance Management Framework to track progress using key performance indicators. These help us measure how we are doing in important areas like emergency response, fire prevention and protecting local communities.

Performance updates are shared with the Service Delivery Board, and the Commissioner's office reviews them through the Strategic Governance Board (SGB). The SGB meets every three months to check progress against our plans and to review financial reports, including how we are managing budgets, savings and efficiencies.

Independent Oversight - To make sure the Service remains open, honest and accountable, we have independent panels that provide extra checks and advice:

- The Ethics, Transparency, and Audit Panel (ETAP) reviews how we manage risks and make decisions.
- The Finance Panel supports ETAP by offering expert advice and closely examining financial matters.

Together, these panels act as our Audit Committee, helping to ensure we meet high standards of governance and public accountability.

Public Performance Meetings - Twice a year, the Commissioner holds open public meetings to review how we are performing. These meetings are transparent and give local people the chance to see how we are progressing against our priorities.

In 2024/25, the meetings focused on:

- Strengthening workplace culture and values
- Responding to inspection findings on how misconduct is handled
- Extending the [Safety Plan \(2020–2024\)](#), to allow time to develop the new [CRMP 2025–2028](#)
- Driving improvement and efficiency across the Service

These meetings help keep the public informed and involved in how their emergency services are run.



1. Chaired by the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office (SCO):

- Staffordshire Commissioner and Chief Officers 2:2: provide strategic leadership and oversight
- Strategic Governance Boards (Fire and Rescue / Collaboration): review performance, budgets and strategic priorities

2. Independent Scrutiny:

External bodies help ensure transparency and high standards:

- HMICFRS: national inspectorate reviewing effectiveness, efficiency and people
- Internal Audit and External Audit: check financial and operational integrity
- Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel: provide ethical oversight and public accountability

3. Service Governance (Attended by SCO):

- Service Management Board: oversees strategic service delivery
- Service Delivery Board: monitors operational performance and key indicators
- Workforce Planning Board: manages staffing, recruitment and workforce development

4. Directorate Meetings:

Response and Prevention and Protection boards: focuses on planning and delivering services.

5. Strategic Risk:

Identifies and manages risks that could affect service delivery and public safety



Recent Updates

The [Safety Plan 2020–2024](#) has been extended and transitioned into the [CRMP 2025–2028](#), effective from 1 January 2025.

Governance continues to focus on efficiency, transparency and cultural reform, in line with national recommendations.

OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE

We continue to meet all legal responsibilities and national standards, helping to keep communities safe and supporting firefighters in delivering a reliable and effective service.

We follow a wide range of laws and national policies that guide how fire and rescue services operate across England. These include:

[Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

[Localism Act 2011](#)

[Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)

[Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)

[Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)

[Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)

[Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)

By complying with these regulations, we ensure our services are safe, professional and accountable.

MUTUAL AID AND NATIONAL RESILIENCE

We work closely with neighbouring fire services through mutual aid agreements. These partnerships allow us to share resources and support each other during large, complex, or cross-border incidents and help ensure that Staffordshire - and the wider UK - can respond quickly and effectively when serious incidents occur.

We are also part of the national resilience programme, which provides access to specialist equipment and highly trained teams. This means we can help respond to major emergencies across the UK, including:

- Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive incidents
- Large-scale fires
- Terrorism
- Natural disasters and other major emergencies

Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity - We work with the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit to plan and train for major emergencies - such as floods, pandemics and terrorist incidents. This partnership ensures a well-coordinated response across all emergency services when it is needed most.

We also have strong business continuity plans in place. These are regularly reviewed and tested to make sure we can keep delivering essential services during disruptions - whether caused by extreme weather, cyber incidents or industrial action.

Annual Governance Statement 2024–2025 - The Commissioner receives all funding for fire and rescue services, including government grants. While the Commissioner sets the overall direction and ensures accountability, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police operate independently.

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

Each year we publish an Annual Governance Statement alongside our [Statement of Accounts](#). These documents explain how we manage our finances, risks and internal controls. For 2024/25, this includes:

- How funding is allocated and spent
- How resources support the [CRMP](#)
- How we ensure value for money and long-term financial sustainability

The accompanying Narrative Statement provides a detailed look at our financial performance, including budget results, capital investments and efficiency improvements.

COMPLIANCE AND ASSURANCE

We are confident that we have met all legal and national standards throughout 2024/25. This includes compliance with:

- [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)
- [Localism Act 2011](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)

A recent government review confirmed that all fire and rescue authorities in England, including Staffordshire, are meeting the expectations of the [National Framework](#) - demonstrating strong governance, financial control and operational readiness.

COMMITMENT TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

Our governance arrangements are designed to ensure that:

- Public funds are used efficiently and effectively
- Decisions are made transparently and ethically
- Risks are identified and managed proactively
- Our services meet both national standards and the needs of our local communities



"We remain dedicated to ongoing improvement and will continue to review and strengthen our governance practices in response to new challenges and opportunities. This ensures we stay effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of our communities."

Ben Adams Staffordshire Commissioner



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: OUR STRATEGIC PLANS

Every fire and rescue service in England must have a clear plan for identifying and managing risks in their communities. This is a key requirement of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) and the plan is known as the [Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\)](#).

Planning for What Matters Most: We work closely with our staff, partners and communities to understand local risks and shape our priorities around what matters most to the people we serve.

From Safety Plan to CRMP: Meeting Staffordshire's Needs - Since 2020, we have followed the [Safety Plan 2020-2024](#), which focused on protecting people, property and the environment. It guided our work in prevention, protection and emergency response - helping to keep our communities safe and resilient.

Although the [Safety Plan](#) was due to end in March 2024, it was extended to the end of the year to tie in with the Commissioner's term of office. This gave us time to:

- Maintain continuity in service delivery
- Engage with the public and partners
- Develop a new strategic plan that reflects local needs

In January 2025, we launched the new [Community Risk Management Plan 2025–2028](#). This plan sets out how we will identify and manage risks across Staffordshire, using the latest data, local insight and national guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

This Statement of Assurance highlights how the Service continues to deliver safe, effective services through strong planning, robust governance and community-focused action.

The Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan - In 2024, the Commissioner introduced a new [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) that sets out clear priorities for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and ensures it continues to meet the needs of Staffordshire's communities - now and in the years ahead. The plan focuses on:

- Helping those most at risk to stay safe
- Protecting people, places and the environment
- Building public confidence in the fire and rescue service
- Preparing for the future with a flexible and responsive workforce

The plan also supports national priorities including:

- Improving workplace culture and values
- Strengthening collaboration with other services
- Delivering value for money

OUR PRIORITIES

Our Vision: Making Staffordshire the Safest Place to Be - Our new [CRMP 2025-2028](#) sets out our priorities based on a detailed assessment of risks across Staffordshire. Everything we do is guided by our vision of *‘making Staffordshire the safest place to be.’*



At the heart of all we do is a strong commitment to delivering a first-class fire and rescue service for our communities. Our people are central to this mission - we are proud of our workforce and are dedicated to keeping it:

- Diverse and inclusive
- Skilled and well-trained
- Flexible and responsive
- Supported and valued

By focusing on what matters most to our communities and investing in our people, we are building a safer, stronger Staffordshire for everyone.



Core Code of Ethics - Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service follows the [Core Code of Ethics](#), which sets out five key principles to guide behaviour and promote a positive culture:

- Putting communities first
- Integrity
- Dignity and respect
- Leadership
- Equality, diversity and inclusion

Everyone working for or with our Service is expected to follow these principles, helping us serve the public with professionalism, fairness and accountability.

Our Commitment to Inclusion – We are proud to welcome people from all backgrounds. We know that every organisation faces challenges, but we are committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels respected and valued - no matter their differences, whether visible or not.

We have published a Statement of Intent to show how seriously we take equality, diversity and inclusion. It explains how we deal with inappropriate behaviour and encourages open, honest conversations within teams. We want all staff to feel confident speaking up if something does not feel right.

This statement supports our ongoing efforts to build a positive and inclusive culture and it is closely linked to the [Core Code of Ethics](#), that guides everything we do.

Our [CRMP 2025–2028](#), sets out three clear priorities that guide everything we do.

These reflect what matters most to our communities, our workforce and the environment.



Our People

Our Commitment to Our Workforce - We aim to build a workforce that is diverse, healthy and highly skilled. By supporting and empowering our people, we help them deliver the best possible service to our communities.



Our Communities

Keeping Communities Safe - Our goal is to reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies across Staffordshire. We do this through a balanced approach that includes prevention and protection activities and emergency response - helping to make our county a safer place to live, work and visit.



Our Environment

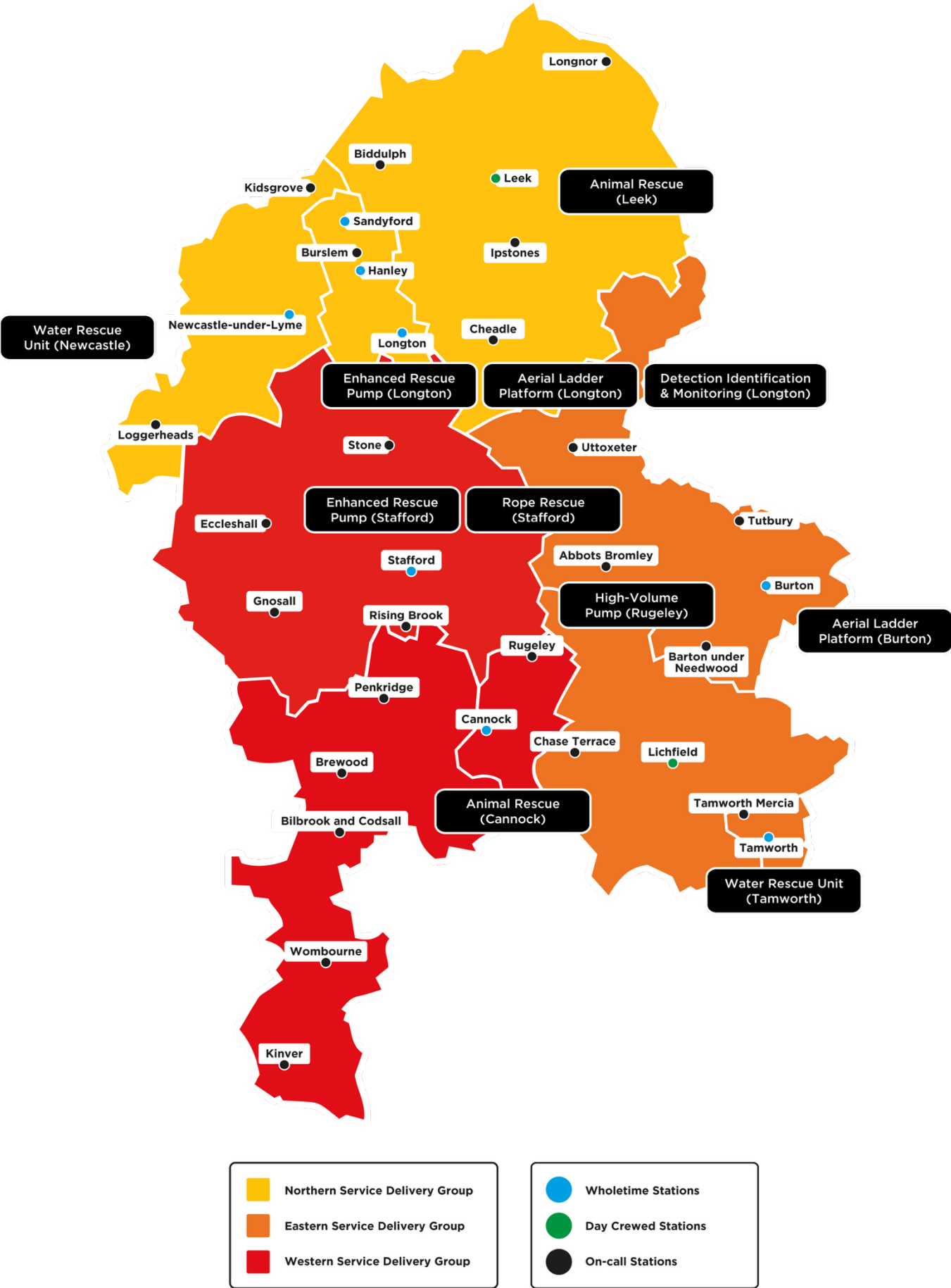
Protecting our Environment - We are working to reduce our carbon footprint and promote sustainability across Staffordshire. By improving how we work and ensuring buildings are safe, we are helping to create cleaner, healthier and more resilient communities.

What This Means For You - Together, the [CRMP](#) and the Commissioner's [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) guide everything we do - from prevention and protection activities, to emergency response and workforce development. They ensure we are:

- Focused on the risks that matter most
- Listening to our communities and partners
- Planning for the future with resilience and flexibility

Over 1,500 residents, staff and partners shared their views with us - and we listened. Your feedback helped shape these priorities and set a clear path for keeping Staffordshire safe in the years ahead.

YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



OUR PROGRESS



Our People

Supporting our People - We are committed to building a highly professional workforce that is diverse, healthy and motivated - and giving our teams support they need to thrive and succeed.

We do this by:

- providing the right training, tools and help to support future leaders
- encouraging honesty, kindness and respect across the Service
- promoting health, fitness and wellbeing at work.
- reaching out to our communities to help make our workforce more diverse

Equipping Our Firefighters - We are continuing to invest in the tools and technology our crews need to stay safe and respond effectively to emergencies. Our **Emergency Response Team** is committed to listening to feedback and ensuring crews have the best tools and training to serve safely and effectively.

Here is what is happening:

- **New Breathing Apparatus (BA):** We have invested £1.2 million in the latest BA equipment, with full rollout expected by September 2025.
- **BA Cleaning Machine:** A new machine at Headquarters helps keep breathing gear clean and safe.
- **Enhanced Rescue Vehicles:** Two new rescue pumps are now in service at Longton and Stafford, ready for complex incidents like building collapses and HGV crashes.
- **Battery-Powered Cutting Tools:** These new tools are being added to on-call vehicles, improving efficiency and reducing environmental impact.
- **Electric Response Vehicle:** In November 2024 we introduced our first fully electric response vehicle. It is now being tested by one of our Station Managers to see how it performs in real-life situations. This is a big step forward in our efforts to reduce emissions and support a cleaner, greener future - and it adds to our growing fleet of hybrid and electric vehicles.

Other Highlights:

- New helmets with built-in torches are now in use
- Safer equipment for working at height is being introduced
- Car entry kits and lighting are being rolled out to all stations
- More smoke curtains, which are made of fire-resistant material and help firefighters control the movement of smoke. They keep escape routes clearer and make it safer for firefighters to enter and manage a situation.
- New vehicles, including 4x4s and appliances, are on the way
- We are exploring the use of remote-controlled robots to support crews at complex incidents

Recruitment and Diversity – We have continued to grow our workforce, with more people joining than leaving since mid-2023. This positive trend reflects our ongoing efforts to strengthen both full-time and on-call staffing.

Highlights from the past year:

- 16 new full-time firefighters completed their training and joined stations across Staffordshire.
- Four more full-time firefighters joined through a transfer route designed for on-call staff.
- 11 new on-call firefighters passed their assessments and started their roles.
- Eight internal promotions were made, including Station, Watch and Crew Manager positions.

We are also listening to feedback from staff who leave the Service. Most say they move on for job security or to join another fire service. This feedback has helped us improve how we recruit and welcome new staff.

Recruitment Update: Our most recent wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign closed in October 2024 - and the response was fantastic. We received over 900 applications, with more than half progressing to the shortlisting stage. This strong interest highlights the growing appeal of a career in the fire and rescue service.

Safe and Fair Recruitment: Since July 2023, all fire and rescue staff are now eligible for standard DBS checks. We have updated our recruitment process to reflect this, helping keep our teams and communities safe.

Supporting a Diverse Workforce: We continue to collect voluntary diversity data during recruitment and onboarding. This helps us understand how well our workforce reflects the communities we serve and supports our ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone.

Looking Ahead:

- **HR Training Days:** Two sessions are planned for autumn 2025, focusing on managing absence effectively and making the most of return-to-work interviews.
- **On-Call Transfers:** We will offer on-call staff the opportunity to transfer into wholetime roles between major recruitment campaigns.
- **Exit Interviews:** We are working to improve engagement with exit interviews, helping us learn more about why people leave and how we can improve staff experience and retention.

‘Positive Action’ in Action: We are committed to building a workforce that truly reflects the diversity of Staffordshire. As part of this commitment we have hosted a series of **Positive Action Days** to support people from underrepresented backgrounds who are interested in joining the fire service.

What Happened: Three events were held at fire stations across the county. We invited individuals who had either shown interest or connected with us through community engagement. Attendees identified as belonging to a protected characteristic group and were welcomed into a supportive, inclusive environment to explore the role of a firefighter.

The sessions included, hands-on experience with firefighter job-related tests, open conversations about shift patterns, responsibilities, and what the role is really like and one-on-one time with fire service personnel for guidance and encouragement. The response was fantastic - participants shared overwhelmingly positive feedback, and 16 people were inspired to take the next step and apply to join the Service.

Looking Ahead: We are building on the success of these Positive Action Days. Using feedback from participants, we will continue to shape future events to ensure that everyone - regardless of background - feels welcomed, informed and supported in exploring a career with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - We are proud to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across our workforce and the communities we serve. By working closely with Staffordshire Police, we share ideas, celebrate lived experiences and support positive cultural change.

Key Highlights:

- We have launched staff networks to offer support, share experiences and help build a more diverse team.
- A joint Inclusivity Calendar with Staffordshire Police helps us celebrate important dates and raise awareness.
- Staff have been trained to carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs), which help us make sure our policies and projects are fair and inclusive.
- A new online system makes it easier for staff to submit and store EqIAs securely.

Supporting Neurodiversity:

- A Neurodiversity Steering Group has been set up with Staffordshire Police to support neurodivergent colleagues.
- A joint Neurodiversity Officer now works across both organisations, offering tailored advice and helping teams make reasonable adjustments.

Looking Ahead: We will continue to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do - from recruitment and training, to how we engage with our communities. Plans include growing our staff networks, improving training and working with partners to make sure everyone feels respected and supported.

Creating a Positive Workplace Culture – We are committed to fostering a respectful and supportive working environment. Over the past year, we have taken meaningful steps to improve how we handle grievances, conduct cases and appeals - ensuring fairness, transparency and timely resolution for all involved.

What the Numbers Tell Us:

- 41 grievances were raised this year, with common themes including training, development and staff conduct
- Two were upheld, four not upheld and 12 partially upheld
- Six were withdrawn and 17 were resolved informally, showing our commitment to early and constructive resolution
- 44 formal complaints were received, including nine related to staff conduct (of these, two were upheld and two partially upheld).

Some grievances reflected shared concerns, particularly around promotions and internal procedures.

Steps We Have Taken:

1. We have reviewed and improved the promotion process, introducing clearer feedback mechanisms aligned with our new appraisal system.
2. A new case management approach is being trialed to reduce delays and improve how we handle grievances and conduct cases.

We have seen growing confidence among staff to raise concerns, reflecting increased trust in our internal processes and the [Core Code of Ethics](#).

Looking Ahead:

- People management training is being rolled out for new and aspiring managers, focusing on soft skills, behaviour management and early resolution. Refresher training is also planned for current managers.
- Policy updates are on the way to give managers and hearing officers clearer guidance and support, helping ensure consistency and fairness.
- A full-day session on managing behaviours and coaching performance will be added to the Supervisory Managers' Course, reinforcing our commitment to a positive and respectful workplace culture.

Looking After Our People - With the support of Occupational Health we offer a wide range of support to help staff stay healthy and well - both physically and mentally.

Support Includes:

- Health advice, sickness reviews and pre-employment checks
- Counselling for trauma, bereavement and mental health
- In-person and remote appointments through a triage system
- Help from occupational health doctors and physiotherapists
- Wellbeing events led by our dedicated wellbeing nurse

Pastoral Care and Community Support: Volunteer chaplains offer 24/7 confidential pastoral support for personal or work-related concerns. We also benefit from an active Retired Network and dedicated volunteers who help with events, training, charity work and maintaining our Memorial Garden.

Mental Health Support: We are committed to creating a workplace where mental health is openly supported.

Here is How We Help:

- Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA): Trained staff who offer a listening ear, spot signs of distress, and guide colleagues to further support.
- TRiM Peer Support: A confidential system to help staff cope after traumatic events, delivered by trained colleagues - not counsellors - who offer confidential support and practical advice. Originally developed by the UK Armed Forces, TRiM helps identify those who may need professional help, including support from Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Thrive App: A wellbeing app offering private access to therapy, emotional support tools and mental health resources - anytime, anywhere. The app has been available to staff for a couple of years now. It helps reduce the stigma around mental health and offers confidential, professional support.

Our Pledge on Domestic Abuse: We believe domestic abuse is never acceptable. We are committed to supporting staff affected by abuse and making sure help is available when it is needed. We train dedicated champions to offer support with care and understanding and we promote programmes that help people build safer, healthier relationships.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing and Managing Absence - We continue to prioritise the health and wellbeing of our workforce. This year we have introduced and enhanced several initiatives to better manage sickness absence and provide compassionate, structured support to staff.

Key Developments:

- A new HR absence tracking system is now in place, with weekly case reviews led by the Head of Response to ensure absences are managed promptly and transparently.
- Our Fitness Advisor now attends all case reviews, helping ensure staff on modified duties receive the right support.
- Wellness Support Plans are being rolled out to help managers offer tailored support - especially for those facing mental health challenges.
- We have revised our capability process to better support staff with long-term health conditions, including clearer guidance on ill-health retirement and a dedicated Occupational Health contact.
- A Wellbeing Day to promote health and resilience across the workforce.

Working Together:

- Monthly case conferences now bring together HR, Occupational Health and our Fitness Advisor to take a collaborative and proactive approach to managing both short - and long-term absence.
- Managers have received training to improve the quality of Occupational Health referrals, helping ensure staff get the right support at the right time.
- We are reviewing key policies - including the Attendance Policy and the Performance and Capability Policy - to strengthen how we manage long-term sickness.

Trends Over the Last Three Years:

- Whole-time staff: Respiratory-related absences have dropped significantly, though there have been small increases in musculoskeletal, general illness and psychological sickness.
- On-call staff: Respiratory absences have also decreased, but musculoskeletal and psychological sickness have seen a rise.
- Non-operational staff: Respiratory absences are slightly down, while stomach/abdominal, neurological and psychological sickness have increased modestly.

Looking Ahead:

- Two HR training days are scheduled for autumn 2025, focusing on effective absence management and consistent use of return-to-work interviews.
- We are also developing a robust ill-health retirement process in collaboration with Occupational Health, to support staff when returning to work is no longer possible.

£50,000 FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE – MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

Celebrating 50 Years with Purpose: To mark 50 years since our organisation first came together we set ourselves a bold goal: raise £50,000 for The Fire Fighters Charity. Thanks to the incredible dedication of our staff, volunteers and supporters, we did not just meet the target - we surpassed it, raising an amazing £54,280!

A Year of Community Spirit: Over 12 months, people from across the Service came together to take part in more than 30 fundraising events. From open days and sponsored walks to community celebrations, every activity played a part in reaching our goal.

Milestone Moments: The fundraising journey was full of memorable highlights and steady progress.

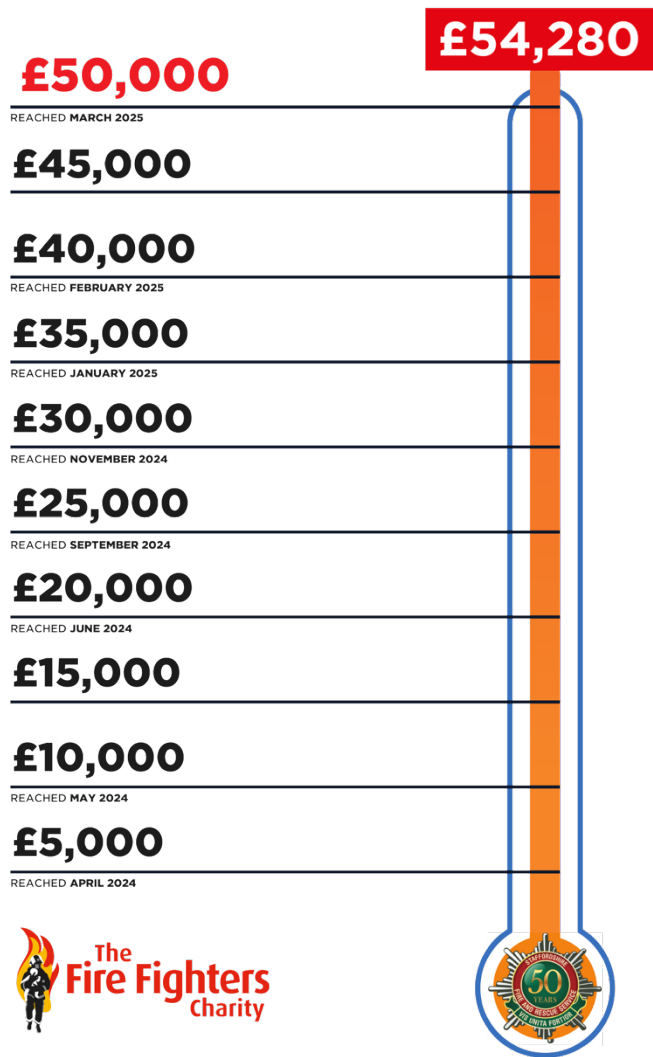
A Message from the Chief Fire Officer, Rob Barber:

“Thank you to everyone who organised, participated in, or donated to our £50k challenge. Your hard work and generosity have made a real difference. Here’s to the next 50 years of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service!”

Supporting the Fire Family:

All funds raised will go directly to The Fire Fighters Charity, helping provide vital mental, physical and social wellbeing support to firefighters, staff, volunteers and their families.

FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE MISSION COMPLETED!





WELLBEING DAY 2025

A day of support, strength and self-care:

Held in January 2025 at the County Showground our Wellbeing Day brought together staff, speakers and support networks to focus on mental health, resilience and personal wellbeing. The agenda included:

Mental health in focus:

Andy's Man Club shared its powerful origin story and mission to provide a safe, non-judgemental space for men to talk. Their #MissionPossible challenge encourages everyone to tackle something they once thought impossible.

Support initiatives:

Support Cards were launched by one of our Watch Managers - small, discreet cards with crisis contact details, designed to be carried and shared when needed most.

Health, resilience and recovery:

ProHealth introduced the concept of neuroplasticity and how to 'neurosculpt' the brain to manage stress.

The Fire Fighters Charity delivered a talk on 'What's strong with you?', shifting the focus from weakness to inner strength.

A moving video on prostate cancer highlighted the importance of early testing and awareness.

REAL STORIES, REAL IMPACT

Rob 'the Barber', a guest speaker and recovering alcoholic, shared his journey through trauma, addiction, and recovery. His initiative, Clean Cut, offers haircuts and one-on-one conversations to help others open up in a safe, informal setting.

A Friendly Face - Nala the wellbeing dog was on hand throughout the day, offering comfort and cuddles to anyone in need of a moment of calm.

Key Takeaway - The day reinforced that mental health is everyone's responsibility. From peer support to professional help, we are committed to ensuring no-one faces challenges alone.

OUR PROGRESS



Our Communities

Keeping Communities Safe - We are working to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies across Staffordshire. Through prevention and **protection** activities and emergency response, we aim to make our county a safer place to live, work and visit.

We do this by:

- Helping people understand the risks and how to stay safe
- Working with partners to identify those most at risk and share vital information
- Focusing our efforts where they will have the biggest impact
- Listening to our communities to shape and improve the services we provide

Keeping People Safe at Home - We are committed to preventing emergencies before they happen - especially for those most at risk in our communities.

Safe and Well Visits: Between April 2024 and March 2025, we carried out 15,398 Safe and Well visits across Staffordshire. These visits help people stay safe at home, with a focus on those most vulnerable to fire.

Referrals come through our partner networks and Contact Centre, ensuring we reach those who need us most. For individuals facing more complex challenges, we offer Extended Safe and Well visits. These provide tailored support for issues such as:

- Hoarding
- Mental health concerns
- Housing problems
- Mobility difficulties
- Substance misuse

By working closely with health, care and housing partners, we ensure that each visit addresses not just fire safety, but wider risks that affect wellbeing and independence.

Year in Review: We started the year strong, with more visits than the previous year. A mid-year dip - due to staff sickness and training - was followed by a rise in activity, surpassing figures from the same period in 2023/24 and 2022/23. Overall, we maintained a high level of service throughout the year.

What's New?

- New risk profiles introduced in February 2024 help us better identify and support high-risk households.
- Prevention teams have been restructured to improve efficiency and focus.
- Enhanced data tools allow us to better target areas most in need.
- Monthly targets have been set to support planning and performance.

Working Together: Partnerships play a vital role in reaching those who need us most. We work closely with:

- Professionals who visit vulnerable people - such as social workers, domiciliary care providers, occupational health therapists and police officers. We offer them “Olive Branch Training” which trains them to spot fire risks in the home. It raises awareness of fire safety and teaches attendees how to refer individuals for a Safe and Well Visit.
- The Fire and Health Partnership, which connects us with NHS and social care professionals to identify vulnerable residents and coordinate support, which is delivered by our specialist teams:
 - Home From Hospital Team helps recently discharged patients return safely to their homes, offering practical support such as heating checks, hazard removal and fire safety advice - helping reduce re-admissions and easing NHS pressures.
 - Falls Response Team attends non-injury falls, assisting individuals safely back to their feet, conducting wellbeing checks and helping prevent unnecessary ambulance callouts and hospital admissions.
- Local councils, housing associations and voluntary groups, who help us reach communities through targeted campaigns and shared data.
- Carer networks and safeguarding boards, which support our outreach to those caring for others, helping us tailor advice and interventions.

These collaborations allow us to deliver more effective, joined-up support to assist the most vulnerable.

Looking Ahead

- We are reviewing our post-incident and engagement policies to improve service delivery.
- A new data management system will streamline how we record and use prevention data.
- Our teams will continue raising awareness at community events and explore new technologies like telecare links.

Supporting Vulnerable Residents: Fire and Health Partnership Team - We continue to work closely with the NHS and local care providers to support vulnerable residents through two key services: Falls Response and Home From Hospital. These initiatives help people stay safe and independent at home, while easing pressure on emergency and health services.

Falls Response Team: Launched in December 2022, the Falls Team has responded to over 2,300 incidents, primarily assisting older adults who have fallen but do not require emergency medical care.

- In 2024/25, the team attended 939 calls, with 86 per cent requiring no further NHS support.
- With an average response time of under 37 minutes, the team provides fast, reassuring help.
- Most patients were safely assisted without injury, helping reduce demand on ambulances and hospitals.

“They arrived so quickly and were so reassuring. I didn’t need to go to hospital, and they even checked my heating and gave me advice.” — John, 76, Stoke-on-Trent

Home from Hospital Team: Since launching in December 2023, this team has supported over 2,600 hospital discharges, helping patients return home safely and comfortably.

The team completes six to seven jobs per day, including fitting key safes, moving furniture and property inspections. Only one readmission occurred within 24 hours, showing the strong impact this team is having.

Partnership Recognition and Impact: These services are delivered in partnership with:

- University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

The Home From Hospital team were the first external partners to receive the Chief Executive Award from University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust - recognising their outstanding contribution to patient care.

An independent evaluation by the University of Chester is currently underway to assess long-term impact and inform future development.

Looking Ahead:

- Funding for the Home From Hospital team is secured until 31 March 2026.
- Funding for the Falls Team is confirmed until 31 December 2025, with plans to extend this to March 2026 to align both services.

We remain committed to growing these partnerships and exploring new ways to support residents through joined-up care.

Learning From Serious Incidents - We are committed to learning from every serious incident to help prevent future harm.

Fatal Fire Conferences: When an accidental fatal fire occurs, we hold dedicated Fatal Fire Conferences to review our involvement and share learning with key partners, including:

- Housing providers
- Social Care teams
- Health services

These sessions help identify opportunities for earlier intervention and improve how we work together to protect vulnerable residents.

Follow-Up and Monitoring: A review of serious incidents highlighted the need for a Safe and Well revisit process. In response, a new Extended Safe and Well Visit Risk Assessment has been developed to guide revisit timeframes:

- Very High Risk – revisit within 6 months
- High Risk – revisit within 12 months

This risk assessment will be reviewed in October 2025 to ensure it is working effectively and consistently in practice.



Educating Young People - We continue to deliver engaging safety education to children and young people across Staffordshire - helping build safer communities through learning.

Safe+Sound Programme: Educates children how to stay safe around fire, roads, water and other hazards through weekly online broadcast sessions and in-person events.

- Over 7,000 Year 5 pupils attended face-to-face events across Staffordshire in 2024/25.
- In-person sessions remain popular, though transport can be a barrier for some schools.
- Weekly online broadcasts continue to attract strong viewership, with a wide range of safety topics delivered by different partners.

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT - ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/25

Over the course of 36 weekly programmes, we reached 269,000 devices, averaging over 7,000 devices per week accessing our content. All sessions are available on demand at learnliveuk.com/safesound.

Operational Crew Involvement: A refreshed Education Delivery Plan was launched in September 2024, with updated crew packages and new grab bags provided to stations for consistent delivery.

Crews now support sessions for Key Stages 1, 3, 4 and after-school groups, based on local needs. Feedback from schools and crews has been overwhelmingly positive.

"My son came home from school full of fire safety tips - he even showed us how to test the smoke alarm!"
— Parent, Stafford

Working With Partners: We team up with a wide range of organisations to share safety messages with children. These include:

- Learn Live, who stream our Safe+Sound sessions
- Schools and education authorities, who support attendance and feedback
- Organisations and businesses such as Staffordshire Police, HSBC, Canal & River Trust, Network Rail, RNLI, DHL and many others who contribute to multi-agency sessions
- Community groups, helping us reach young people outside of school

Together, we are helping the next generation stay safe and informed.

Safeguarding: Protecting Vulnerable People – We play a vital role in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns across the county. Through operational incidents, Safe and Well visits, and community engagement, our staff help protect vulnerable individuals and connect them with the support they need.

Safeguarding Referrals: Between April 2024 and March 2025, we raised 121 safeguarding referrals. The most common concern was self-neglect, often linked to poor living conditions, hoarding or lack of access to basic essentials.

Training and Awareness: We continue to prioritise safeguarding training for all roles. Staff feedback shows that face-to-face training is especially effective - particularly for sensitive topics - helping teams feel confident and prepared to act when concerns arise.

Working in Partnership: Our Prevention Teams work closely with:

- Social care services
- Health professionals
- Housing providers
- Voluntary and community organisations

Together, we ensure individuals receive the right support at the right time. A new Safeguarding Dashboard is in development to improve how we track and manage cases, helping us respond more effectively.

This year's safeguarding activity reflects our ongoing commitment to protecting vulnerable people and supporting our staff to act with confidence and compassion.

Connecting with Communities – We continue to strengthen our presence across local communities - using events and outreach to promote fire safety and raise awareness of career opportunities within the Service.

Key Highlights:

- Recruitment for wholetime, on-call, and support roles is actively promoted at all community events, alongside essential fire safety messaging.
- A growing presence at events over the past two years has led to increased interest in joining the Service.
- Strong relationships have been built with diverse communities, including Sudanese, Eritrean, Afro-Caribbean and Asian groups, helping to build trust and broaden engagement.
- Plans are in place to provide recruitment materials directly to our firefighters, enabling more effective promotion during local events.

Looking Ahead

We will continue to build on these relationships and expand our outreach - ensuring that recruitment and safety messages reach all parts of the community.

By working closely with diverse groups and making resources more accessible to frontline teams, we aim to create a more inclusive and representative workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

OUR PROGRESS



Our Environment

Caring for Our Environment - We are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and helping build safer, healthier and more sustainable communities.

We do this by:

- Using greener practices and making better use of resources
- Working with partners to make buildings safer for everyone - including our firefighters
- Preparing for risks like flooding and wildfires and supporting efforts to tackle climate change

Environmental and Sustainability Update - We continue to deliver on our five-year [Environmental and Sustainability Strategy \(2022–2027\)](#), with a growing focus on long-term impact, carbon reduction and community engagement.

Fleet Innovation:

- **Electric Vans:** Three fully electric vans were introduced in February 2024 for the Estates Team. Feedback has been excellent, with strong performance even in challenging conditions.
- **Hybrid Response Cars:** Five petrol hybrids replaced older diesel vehicles in May 2024, helping reduce fuel use and CO₂ emissions.
- **Electric Response Vehicle:** Our first fully electric response car was commissioned in late 2024. Testing is underway to assess its range and reliability.

Infrastructure and Strategy:

- **EV Charging:** Charging points have been installed at multiple sites to support the transition to a low-emission fleet.
- **Waste and Recycling:** Improvements have been made at key locations to boost recycling and reduce waste.
- **Green Spaces:** Fire stations are beginning to incorporate green areas to support staff wellbeing and biodiversity.

Community and Biodiversity:

- **Planters and Pollinators:** HMP Oakwood Prison donated handcrafted wildflower planters to three stations, creating relaxing outdoor spaces for staff.
- **Beekeeping Initiative:** Two hives were introduced at Stafford Fire Station to support pollination and sensory wellbeing.

Solar Energy and Strategic Planning:

- **Solar Panels:** Investment in solar energy is being explored, with a projected four to five-year payback period.
- **Fleet Strategy:** Full electrification of heavy fleet vehicles is not yet cost-effective.

Looking Ahead:

- Vehicles: Upgrading the heavy fleet
- Buildings: Enhancing energy efficiency
- Measures: Monitoring progress and impact.
- Engagement: Staff are invited to join the Environmental Working Group to contribute ideas and help shape future initiatives.

Clean Concept: Protecting Our People - Last year we told you about the Clean Concept initiative, led by our Emergency Response Team and supported by the Fire Brigades Union and Unison, which aims to reduce firefighter exposure to harmful post-fire contaminants. The approach is simple but powerful:

Clean – Contain – Control.

Phase One Achievements:

- “Shower within the hour” policy now embedded across all stations
- Decontamination wipes and cleaning kits issued to crews
- External Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) storage introduced to prevent contamination inside stations
- Soap dispensers and hose reel brushes added to appliances
- Post-incident cleaning guidance published and shared



What's Next? Phases Two and Three:

- New breathing apparatus (BA) sets with easier-to-clean designs
- Continued investment in Clean Cab appliances
- Red/Amber/Green zoning of stations to manage contamination risk
- Installation of a BA cleaning machine for deep cleans during servicing
- Planned collaboration with UCLAN and the FBU for further research

This initiative is helping to protect our workforce and embed safer practices into everyday operations.

Ongoing Protection Work: Keeping Our Communities safe - Throughout 2024/25, our Protection Teams have continued to deliver vital fire safety services across Staffordshire. This includes responding to consultations, conducting fire safety audits and inspecting non-domestic premises following incidents helping to ensure buildings are safe and sustainable - now and in the future.

What We Do: We carry out several key protection activities to help keep people safe in commercial and public buildings:

- Fire Safety Audits - In-depth checks to ensure buildings meet legal fire safety standards
- Licensing Consultations - Ensuring fire safety in venues like pubs and clubs before licences are issued
- Building Regulation Consultations – Contributing to these to ensure that fire safety is considered in new building designs and refurbishments
- Post-Fire Inspections - Investigating incidents to support recovery and prevent future fires



Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP): Launched in February 2024, our updated RBIP helps us focus on buildings that pose the greatest risk. Each premises are given a risk rating - Very High, High, Medium, Low, or Very Low - to guide inspection frequency and approach. By March 2025, 92 per cent of the RBIP was completed, showing strong progress in proactive fire safety management.

Fire Safety (England) Regulations: We have fully implemented the regulations for tall residential buildings, receiving all required plans and reports. Our teams have responded to 109 faults in firefighting installations, with tailored action plans developed to ensure resident safety.

2024/25 Highlights:

- 511 Fire Safety Audits completed - almost double the previous year's figure, thanks to our new RBIP allowing teams to focus on higher-risk premises such as care homes, hotels, tall buildings and hospitals.
- 767 Building Regulation Consultations - up from 701 last year
- 645 Licensing Consultations - a significant decrease from 872, reflecting a shift in demand
- 122 Post-Fire Inspections - down from 166. These inspections help us understand the causes of fires and identify any follow-up actions needed.

Improvements and Developments:

- A new protection recording system implemented, improving how we track and manage activity.
- A Central Protection Team now handles Building Regulation Consultations, freeing up local teams for proactive work.
- Four new Protection Officers joined the team and are working toward their Level 4 Diploma in Fire Safety.
- Operational crews are now conducting compliance checks, supported by training funded through the Protection Uplift Grant.

Looking Ahead:

- A full review of our internal and external quality assurance processes is underway, with support from Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- We are continuing to focus on succession planning, further development of the RBIP and delivering against our annual service delivery plan.
- Additional Level 2 fire safety training courses are scheduled from January 2025 to further strengthen our teams' capabilities.

Fire Hydrants: Ready When Needed – We have significantly expanded our hydrant testing programme to ensure hydrants across the county are operational and ready to support emergency response.

Key Highlights:

- Since March 2024, 10 wholetime and four on-call stations have been actively testing hydrants, supported by three dedicated Hydrant Technicians.
- A new hydrant management system has been introduced to improve data tracking and reporting.
- Staffordshire has 18,436 adopted fire hydrants, with 38.9 per cent tested or inspected by March 2025.
- Over 7,100 hydrants have undergone statutory testing since January 2024, in line with the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

Hydrants are tested based on risk categories, with inspection intervals ranging from 12 months in very high-risk areas to 84 months in low-risk rural locations. This ensures hydrants are maintained appropriately to support effective emergency response across all communities.

TRANSFORMING FOR THE FUTURE

We are committed to delivering a modern, efficient and sustainable service. Our Transformation Programme is helping us achieve this by improving how we work, where we work and the tools we use.

Phase One: Completed - The first phase is now complete, delivering £1.3 million in recurring savings. Key achievements include:

- A full review of our prevention and protection services
- Formal adoption of the on-call Three-person Crewing Model
- Progress on the Shared Estates Strategy, with police now permanently based at several fire stations

Progress is tracked through a live system monitored by senior leaders and the Commissioner's Strategic Governance Board.

Phase Two: Underway - With a further £1 million in savings needed by 2029, Phase Two focuses on efficiency, productivity and service delivery. Five workstreams are in progress or have been reviewed:

- Administration Review - Ensuring resources are used effectively across the Service
- Clean Concept Implementation - Work is ongoing to reduce firefighter exposure to contaminants, including investment in new appliances, breathing apparatus, and improved facilities.
- ICT Systems Optimisation - Improving digital tools and data management
- Environmental Review - Aligning with the Service's Environmental Strategy, this includes reviewing solar panel projects and exploring other sustainability opportunities.
- Community Sprinkler Project - Concluded in March 2025, delivering annual savings of £55,000, this long-term initiative installed sprinklers in 19 tall buildings.

Additional Efficiency Measures:

- Vacancy control and role reconfigurations have generated savings of £85,000.
- A capital programme review is expected to realise £200,000 in savings.
- Property disposals are projected to generate £600,000 in capital receipts.
- The Shared Estates Strategy continues to deliver cost-effective collaboration with Staffordshire Police.

Looking Ahead: We remain focused on delivering a transformation programme that balances financial responsibility with service excellence. Through strong governance, strategic planning and innovation, we are building a more resilient and future-ready organisation.

Estates and Infrastructure - We manage a diverse property portfolio of 35 buildings, including 21 Private Finance Initiative (PFI) fire stations and 14 residual sites. Our Estates Team, shared with Staffordshire Police, oversees both outsourced and in-house facilities management.

Recent Highlights:

- Refurbishments at Abbots Bromley and Stafford Fire Stations
- Upgrades to our Learning and Development and Joint Emergency Transport Services (JETs) facilities
- £0.7 million invested in 2024/25, with £1.7 million planned for 2025/26.

Looking ahead: Our Estates Team will continue to enhance facilities, support sustainability goals and expand collaboration with public sector partners - ensuring our infrastructure meets the evolving needs of both the Service and the communities we serve.

Digital Transformation - Throughout 2024/25, our ICT Team has made significant strides in modernising systems and improving our organisational resilience.

Recent Highlights:

- Migration to Microsoft 365, improved Wi-Fi, antivirus and multi-factor authentication
- Tablets and a new mobile devices homepage have improved access to operational data
- Stabilising and replacing Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) and improving network connectivity
- Email, file storage and collaboration tools have been moved to cloud-based platforms, improving efficiency and data compliance.

Looking Ahead: A joint project with West Midlands Fire Service is underway to upgrade our communication and dispatch systems - the Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD). Expected to launch in January 2026, the new system will offer:

- Enhanced Functionality: Customisable touchscreen hot-keys, automated incident notifications and improved messaging and playback tools will provide better user experience.
- User-Centric Design: Workshops and testing phases are ensuring the system is intuitive and efficient for control operators and operational staff.
- Integration: The system will link with MDTs and support national initiatives to improve reporting.

HIS MAJESTY’S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS)



We continue our journey of improvement through regular independent inspections carried out by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). These independent reviews help us understand what we are doing well and where we can do better - so we can serve you more effectively.

Fire and Rescue Service 2023-25 (Effectiveness, Efficiency and People) - HMICFRS’ assessment of how are doing - in our latest HMICFRS inspection report (published September 2024):

- We were rated *Outstanding* for how we respond to major incidents, thanks to strong teamwork and preparation across agencies.
- We received *Good* ratings in several important areas, including how we plan for risk, use our resources, respond to emergencies and support positive workplace culture.
- Some areas were rated *Adequate*, such as our fire prevention work, regulation of safety in buildings, inclusion and fairness in the workplace and leadership development.

What Was Highlighted as Promising Practice:

- Teaming up with the NHS to help people after a fall or hospital stay
- Strong planning and coordination with other organisations for major incidents

Areas for Improvement:

- Making fire prevention and protection even stronger
- Promoting fairness, diversity and leadership opportunities for all our staff

Our Promise to You: We are committed to continuous improvement. We have already acted on the recommendations and will keep working hard to earn your trust, deliver excellent service and help keep Staffordshire safe.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Responding to major incidents	Understanding fire and risk	Preventing fire and risk		
	Responding to fires and emergencies	Public safety through fire regulation		
	Best use of resources	Promoting fairness and diversity		
	Future affordability	Managing performance and developing leaders		
	Promoting values and culture			
	Right people, right skills			

Our gradings from our latest HMICFRS inspection*

**HMICFRS measure fire and rescue services against the 11 characteristics of 'good' awarding potential gradings of Outstanding, Good, Adequate, Requires Improvement or Inadequate.*

Reflections from the Commissioner

"I continue to monitor Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's progress against improvement plans through my regular performance monitoring, robust governance meetings and improvement boards. I am pleased that the improvements I have seen have been recognised in the latest report by His Majesty's inspectorate."



"It is particularly encouraging that the Service has been graded Outstanding in its response to major and multi-agency incidents, and Good across the majority of other areas. These results reflect the dedication and professionalism of our firefighters and staff, and the clear direction set by the Chief Fire Officer and senior leadership team."

"While there are still areas for improvement, I'm reassured by the Service's commitment to continuous development and its proactive approach to addressing challenges. The progress made since the last inspection demonstrates strong leadership and a clear focus on delivering the best possible service to the people of Staffordshire."

Ben Adams

Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime

HMICFRS' Report on Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services - In March 2023, HMICFRS published a national report raising serious concerns about bullying, misogyny, discrimination and how misconduct is handled in some fire and rescue services. The report made 35 recommendations to improve workplace culture, of these 19 were directed at Chief Fire Officers. We have completed a full self-assessment and taken action to address all 19 recommendations.

Improvements include:

- Stronger training on equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Clearer processes for reporting inappropriate behaviour
- Better whistleblowing and grievance procedures
- Fairer recruitment and promotion practices

We remain committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected and included.

Standards of Behaviour: The Handling of Misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services - Following national concerns about unacceptable behaviour - such as bullying and misogyny - the Home Secretary commissioned an inspection into how fire and rescue services handle misconduct.

We were one of 10 services selected for this review, which took place in late 2023. Inspectors looked at how misconduct is identified, investigated and managed and how confident staff feel in these processes. The inspection involved interviews, focus groups and file reviews.

No specific concerns were raised about Staffordshire, and the findings aim to support improvements across all services. The full report was published in August 2024 and is available on the HMICFRS website.

State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023 - In his latest report (May 2024), His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services, Andy Cooke, recognised some progress across fire services - but stressed that urgent reform is still needed.

Key points include:

- Slow progress on reform: Improvements are happening, but too slowly.
- Operational independence: New laws may give Chief Fire Officers more control over local decisions.
- Pay and conditions: A review is underway to modernise the pay system.
- Culture and values: Issues like bullying and discrimination still exist in some services.
- Leadership: Strong leadership is essential, but not consistent across all services.
- Diversity: More work is needed to improve representation and inclusion.
- Accountability: Services may soon be required to publish responses to inspection reports.
- Looking ahead: A proposed College of Fire and Rescue could help standardise training and support leadership development.

Tracking Our Progress: We regularly publish updates on how we are addressing areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS, including the actions we are taking and our progress against their recommendations. You can read the latest update on our website www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk. All national inspection reports are also available on the HMICFRS website www.hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk

Grenfell Tower Inquiry - The Phase Two Report of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry was published in September 2024, examining the causes of the 2017 fire and how the building came to be in such a hazardous condition. The report made 58 recommendations across sectors including construction, regulation and emergency services.

Learning and Action: We have adopted 18 recommendations relevant to fire and rescue services. Of these, 14 have already been completed, leading to improvements in key areas such as:

- Access and lift procedures for high-rise buildings
- Fire control training and communications
- Incident command and radio use
- Firefighter training and operational debriefing
- Water supply coordination and emergency planning

These changes are helping to strengthen our operational readiness and ensure lessons from Grenfell are embedded into everyday practice.

Read the full report: [Grenfell Tower Inquiry – Phase Two](#)



OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

Responding to Emergencies

Incidents Attended: Between April 2024 and March 2025, we responded to 8,825 incidents, very slightly down on the same period for the previous year (8,873). Key trends included:

- Accidental Dwelling Fires: up by 5.05 per cent
- Secondary Fires (smaller outdoor fires): up 9.54 per cent
- Road Traffic Collisions: down by 11.28 per cent

Service Availability: We aim to have fire engines ready to respond at all times. In 2024/25:

- Overall availability was 66.09 per cent, slightly up on the previous year (64.7 per cent).
- Wholtime stations (crewed 24/7) had excellent availability at 98.85 per cent.
- On-call stations (part-time crews) had 55.84 per cent availability, slightly up on last year (54.13 per cent).
- The main challenge remains ensuring enough trained on-call firefighters are available, especially in rural areas.

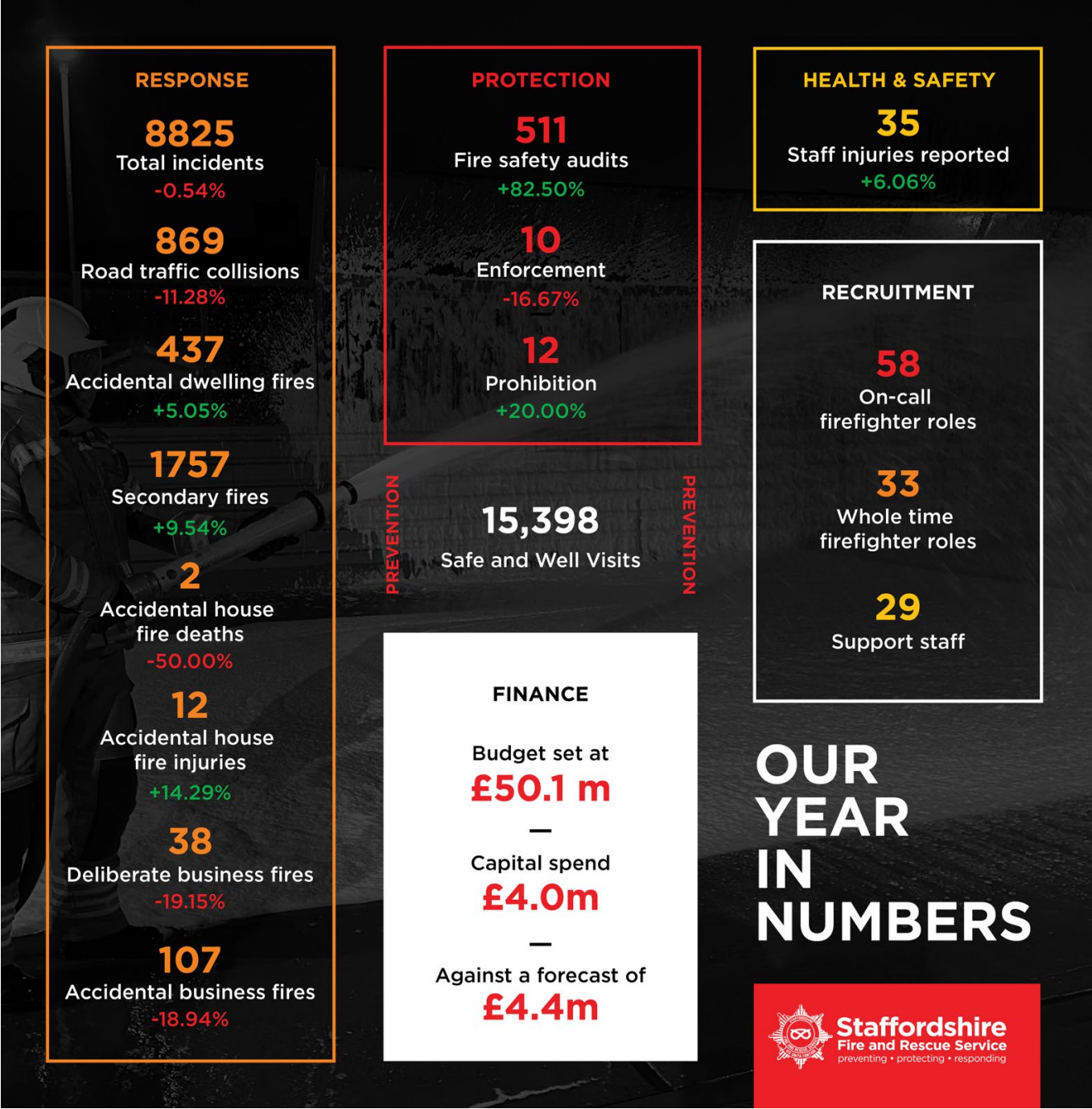
Response Times: We measure how quickly we reach emergencies:

- Average response time: 9 minutes 33 seconds, similar to previous years.
- Response standard: We aim to reach 80 per cent of incidents within target times based on risk level. This year, we achieved this 80.5 per cent of the time, consistent with the same period last year.

Some delays were linked to increased incidents at prisons and in rural areas with limited access.

Looking Ahead: We continue to monitor and improve our response performance. While we have seen increased demand, especially for outdoor fires and false alarms, our crews remain committed to reaching people quickly and safely. We are also working to improve on-call availability and reduce delays in harder-to-reach areas.

The infographic below highlights our performance over the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, offering our communities a quick and easy overview of our key achievements.



Understanding Fire Statistics: The Home Office publishes detailed data on fire and rescue incidents across England. These statistics cover everything from fire causes and response times to fatalities, casualties and non-fire emergencies. You can explore the full collection here: [Home Office Fire Statistics](#)

How We Contribute: Our Performance and Assurance Team plays a key role in this national effort. Each year, the team prepares an official data return to the [Home Office](#), using information from our online Incident Recording System. This helps ensure that Staffordshire’s performance is accurately reflected in national reports - and supports continuous improvement across the fire sector.

EMERGING RISKS AND CHALLENGES

As Staffordshire continues to grow and change, so do the risks faced by our communities and our fire and rescue service. We are constantly adapting to new and emerging threats to keep people safe and ensure our firefighters are prepared. Some key emerging risks and challenges are listed below.

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) - As part of the UK's transition to sustainable energy, large-scale BESS sites are becoming more common. These systems, used to store electricity, can pose serious fire and explosion risks. They require specialist firefighting techniques and careful coordination with manufacturers and environmental agencies to manage them safely.

We are working closely with local authorities and site operators and we are actively involved in the planning and risk assessment of BESS sites, ensuring emergency access, fire prevention measures and robust emergency response plans are in place. This proactive approach helps protect both local communities and firefighters by identifying and managing site-specific risks from the outset.

Cost of Living Pressures - Rising living costs are increasing fire risks in the home, especially in areas of multiple-deprivation. People may turn to unsafe heating or cooking methods, or be unable to afford smoke alarms. We are targeting support to those most at risk.

Cyber Security - As we rely more on digital systems, we face growing threats from cyber-attacks. These could disrupt emergency responses or compromise sensitive data. We are investing in training and technology to stay protected.

Electric Vehicles and Alternative Fuels - The rise in electric vehicles and e-bikes brings new challenges, especially due to the risks from lithium-ion batteries. Our crews are being trained to safely manage these incidents and stay up to date with evolving technology.

Major Infrastructure Projects - New road and rail developments require us to plan for complex emergencies, such as tunnel fires or large-scale accidents. We are working closely with partners to ensure we are prepared.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) - Found in some older buildings, RAAC can collapse without warning, especially during fires. We are working with national bodies to identify and plan for these risks.

Climate Change - More frequent wildfires and flooding are stretching our resources. We are investing in training, equipment and partnerships to respond effectively and protect our communities.

Health Emergencies - The COVID-19 pandemic showed how vital our role is in supporting public health. We continue to work with health partners to prepare for future emergencies.

Terrorism - We are part of national efforts to prepare for and respond to terrorist incidents. Our teams are trained to work alongside police and other agencies to keep people safe.

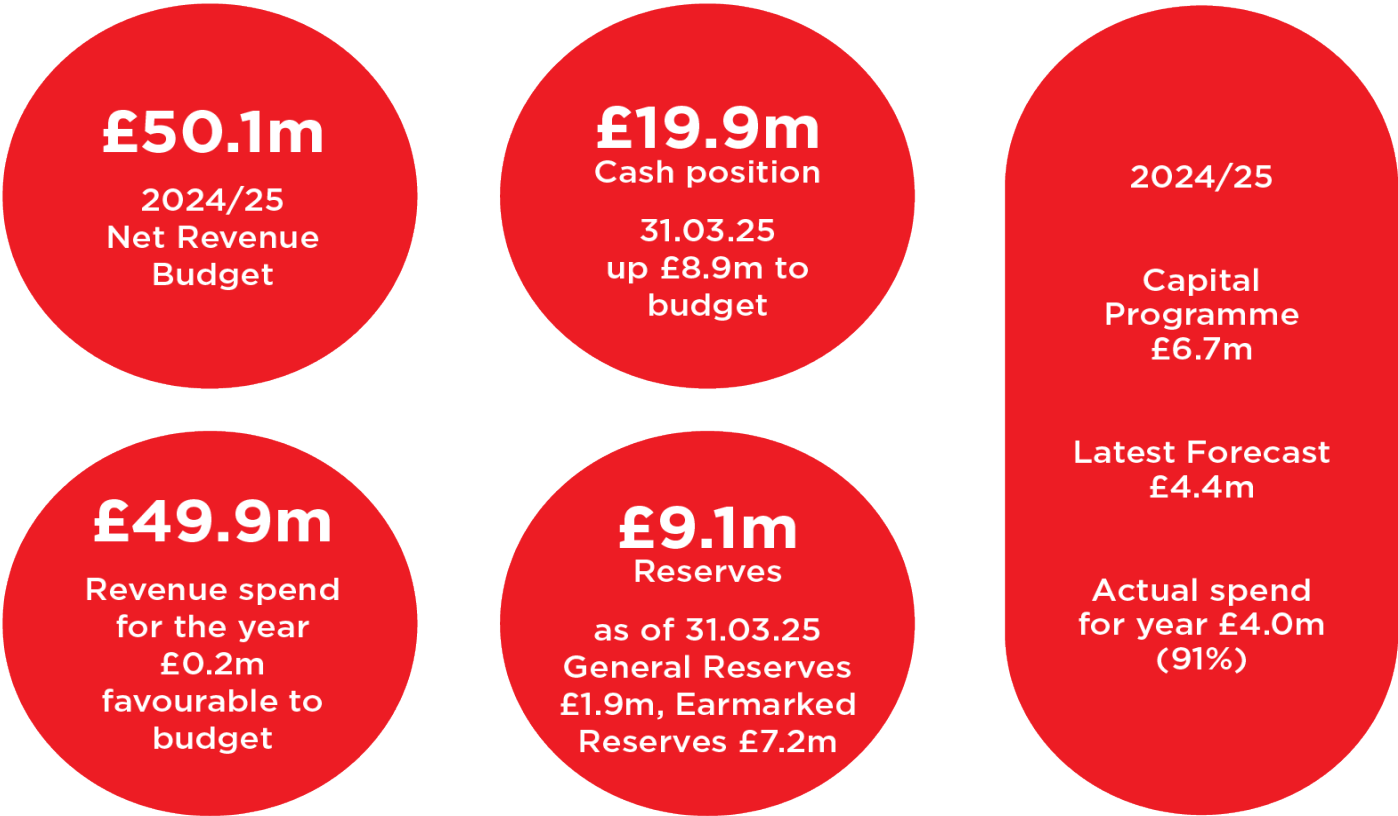
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

We continue to manage our finances responsibly, ensuring public funds are used effectively to protect communities and support frontline services.

Budget and Spending – We operated within our approved £50.1 million revenue budget, ending the year slightly under budget at £49.9 million. This allowed for a contribution to capital financing and helped maintain financial stability, despite rising costs and increased demand.

Council Tax - The Band D council tax was set at £86.77, a modest increase of 2.99 per cent (£2.52), in line with national limits. This supported the continued delivery of essential services and investment in future improvements.

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service Finance Update



Capital Investment - A total of £4.0 million was invested in capital projects, representing 91 per cent of the planned spend. Key investments included:

- Two new aerial ladder platforms (ALPs) and two enhanced rescue pumps (ERPs) vehicles to improve emergency response
- £1 million in operational equipment, including hydraulic cutting tools and breathing apparatus
- Refurbishments at Stafford Fire Station and Fire Headquarters training facilities
- Technology upgrades, such as new mobile data terminals, digital vehicle checks and improved connectivity for crews
- Sustainability initiatives, including electric vehicle charging points and trials of electric vehicles

Fleet and Estates - We allocated £2.1 million to maintain a modern and reliable fleet. Co-location projects with Staffordshire Police progressed at several stations, including Hanley, Tamworth, Chase Terrace, Penkridge, Kinver, Stone and Uttoxeter - enhancing collaboration and reducing costs.

Income and Savings -

- Interest income reached £1.1 million, exceeding expectations by £585,000, due to higher cash balances from pension grant funding.
- The year-end cash balance stood at £19.9 million, £8.9 million above forecast.
- Energy savings and a switch to a new liability insurer contributed to a favourable financial position.

Legal Settlement - The Service received £0.5 million from a national legal settlement with Motorola, following a Competition Appeal Tribunal ruling on Airwave charges.

Staffing and Efficiency -

- Pay costs totalled £33.6 million, closely aligned with the budget
- Recruitment continued across firefighter and support roles
- Shared services with Staffordshire Police and a focus on productivity helped deliver more with existing resources
- No ill-health retirement payments were made this year

Reserves and Borrowing - Reserves remained stable, providing a financial cushion for future challenges. Borrowing levels were kept prudent to ensure long-term investments remain affordable.

Looking Ahead: The Service is preparing for future financial pressures, including inflation and reduced funding from 2025/26. Financial Challenge workshops were held in Spring 2025 to engage staff in identifying £1 million in savings needed by 2029.

The new [Community Risk Management Plan](#) and the Commissioner's [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) will guide how resources are used to meet the evolving needs of Staffordshire's communities.

Understanding the Annual Statement of Accounts - The Annual Statement of Accounts gives a clear and transparent overview of how we manage our finances over the year. It follows national standards set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), ensuring consistency and accountability.

What's Inside?

- *Statement of Responsibilities* - Explains the roles of the Authority and Treasurer in managing public funds
- *Annual Governance Statement* - Assesses how well the Service is governed and identifies areas for improvement
- *Statement of Accounting Policies* - Outlines how financial transactions are recorded and reported
- *Comprehensive Income & Spending Statement* - Shows where money came from and how it was spent during 2024/25
- *Movement in Reserves Statement* - Tracks changes in reserve funds and how they support future spending
- *Balance Sheet* - Provides a snapshot of the Service's financial position as of 31 March 2025
- *Cash Flow Report* - Details how cash moved in and out of the Service throughout the year

For more detailed financial information, the full Annual Statement of Accounts 2024/25 is available on our website www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk. Printed copies can be requested by contacting our finance team on **0300 330 1000**.

CAREERS AND RECRUITMENT: JOIN OUR TEAM

We offer a wide range of exciting and rewarding career opportunities - whether you are on the frontline or supporting behind the scenes.

Firefighters - Our firefighters respond to emergencies including fires, road traffic collisions and rescues. They also work closely with communities to prevent incidents and promote safety.

On-Call Firefighters - On-call firefighters are paid, part-time professionals who respond to emergencies from home or work. It is a flexible way to serve your community while maintaining your main job.



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.

Non-operational fire staff - Not all heroes wear fire kit. Our fire staff play a vital role in areas such as:

- Contact Centre
- Learning and Development
- Risk Planning
- ICT
- Strategy and Intelligence
- Prevention and Protection
- Business Support
- Fire and Health Partnerships
- Risk Management
- Business Continuity

We also share key services like human resources, corporate communications, finance and estates with Staffordshire Police, strengthening collaboration and efficiency.

Be Part of Something Bigger - Whether you are drawn to the action or want to support from behind the scenes, there is a place for you at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Explore current opportunities at: www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/careers



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

We Want to Hear From You

Your feedback matters. If you have any thoughts, ideas, or suggestions about our Statement of Assurance, **we would love to hear from you.**

Drop us an email at **consultation@staffordshirefire.gov.uk**
Or visit us online at **www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/contact-us**

While you are there, explore more about what we do - from fire safety advice to community initiatives. There is plenty more to discover on our website.

Contact

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Pirehill
Stone
Staffordshire
ST15 0BS



**Report of the Chair and Secretary to the
Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel
Monday 17 November 2025**

**Review of Panels Procedures to Deal with Complaints Against the
Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and/or the Deputy Police Fire
and Crime Commissioner**

1. Recommendations:

1.1 That the Panel consider the report and provides guidance on the current process and the level of Panels involvement in the complaints process. Options are:

- a) Remain the same
- b) Involvement of the Chair and Vice Chair
- c) Establishing a Complaints Sub Committee.

2. Background

2.1 At the last meeting of the Panel on 22 September the Panel set up a Working Group to look at their Terms of Reference and Procedure rules.

2.2 During on the Working Group meetings the way that the Panel deal with complaints made against the Commissioner was discussed. It was suggested a detailed review of the procedure.

2.3 This report requests guidance on the level of member participation in the process.

3. Detail

3.1 The Panel has a statutory responsibility to consider complaints about the personal conduct of the Commissioner and/or his Deputy. That responsibility is delegated to the Secretary (Monitoring Officer) to the Panel with the requirement that a report on complaints dealt with is submitted annually.

3.2 The procedure for the handling of complaints is published on the Panel's webpages.

3.3 In April 2019, the Panel revised the Complaints procedure to reflect the extension of the Panel's remit to include the Commissioner's Fire governance role and to ensure that an advice note from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) was being complied with.

3.4 The current Procedure is attached for information.

4.0. Equalities Implications

4.11 None

5.0. Legal Implications

5.1 The report addresses the implications for the Panel of The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire (Fire and Rescue Authority) Order 2018 and the Policing and Crime Act 2017, and The Policing Protocol Order 2023.

6.0 Resource and Value for Money Implications

6.1. There are no significant resource or value for money implications from this report.

7.0 Risk Implications

7.1. The review may cause a delay in dealing with complaints.

Report Author:

Councillor Richard Cox (Chair) and Panel Secretary

Support Officer Contact: Mandy Pattinson

E-mail: mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

Below Relates to Complaints Against the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and/or the Deputy Police Fire and Crime Commissioner.

Introduction

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 which established the Police and Crime Panel gives the Panel the responsibility for dealing with some complaints against the Police and Crime Commissioner and/or the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. This was extended to include Fire.

The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 set out the way in which complaints or conduct matters about a Police and Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner should be handled.

The Police Fire and Crime Panel have appointed Staffordshire County Council's Monitoring Officer to receive and deal with complaints against the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner. The Monitoring Officer is independent and experienced in handling complaints.

The Monitoring Officer will record all complaints in the Recorded Complaints and Conduct Matters Register and consider how they should be handled.

Duties to Preserve Evidence

When a complaint is received by the Monitoring Officer, they must ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to obtain and preserve evidence relating to the complaint in question.

As soon as the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner or the Deputy Police Fire and Crime Commissioner become aware of a complaint they should take all appropriate steps to obtain and preserve evidence relating to that complaint.

How to Complain About The Police Fire And Crime Commissioner

If your complaint relates to a *criminal offence* that you feel may involve the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, or their deputy, then you should contact the Independent Complaints Police Complaints Commission. You can do this as follows:

Telephone: 0300 020 0096 Fax: 020 7404 0430
Email: enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk
Post: Independent Police Complaints Commission
PO Box 473, Sale, M33 0BW

If your complaint relates to non-criminal behaviour, by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner or their deputy or if you are not sure whether a criminal offence involved, then you should submit your complaint in writing, giving as much information as possible to Staffordshire Police Fire and Crime Panel's Monitoring Officer:

Staffordshire Police Fire and Crime Panel Monitoring Officer
c/o Mandy Pattinson
Member and Democratic Services Unit, Staffordshire County Council
County Building, Stafford, ST16 2DH
e mail: mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk

It is important that you sign your complaint and provide your name and address. We will not consider anonymous complaints. You may request that your details are kept anonymous and this will be considered by the Monitoring Officer, who will contact you to discuss that request.

Once received your complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the following process:

The Monitoring Officer will assess your complaint and decide whether the Police Fire and Crime Panel should handle your complaint or whether it should be referred elsewhere:

1. Complaints about the actions of Staffordshire Police will be referred to the Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police through the Police Standards Unit.
2. Complaints about the policies of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner will be referred to the Commissioner to respond directly.
3. Other complaints out of the scope of the Police Fire and Crime Panel will be referred to the appropriate body (i.e.; Probation Service, Crown Prosecution Service etc).

Your complaint may be rejected if:

- It is about a staffing matter
- it is about something that happened more than 12 months ago
- the matter has already been the subject of another complaint
- the complaint is made anonymously
- the complaint is vexatious, oppressive or an abuse of the complaints procedures
- the complaint is a repetition of a previous complaint

If your complaint is rejected by the Monitoring Officer you will be informed by letter and given the reason(s) why it has been rejected.

The Monitoring Officer will inform the person that you have complained about that a complaint has been made and will gather all relevant information. The Monitoring Officer will also notify the Chief Executive of the Police Fire and Crime Commission of the complaint. (See above if you want your details kept anonymous.)

The Monitoring Officer may call a meeting and ask you and the person complained about to attend a meeting and answer questions.

If your complaint is upheld the Monitoring Officer will decide if any of the following sanctions should be imposed.

- Formal apology by the person complained about.
- Formal apology from the Police Fire and Crime Panel on behalf of the person complained about.
- Issue of a press release on the nature of the complaint and the committee's decision.

The Monitoring Officer has no legal powers to apply sanctions other than to provide an opinion on the conduct of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and request an apology.

If your complaint is not upheld no action will be taken against the person you have complained about.

The Monitoring Officer will make a suggestion as to how your complaint may be resolved and will give you and the person complained about an opportunity to comment on the suggestion.

The Monitoring Officer will then make a final decision. They will also consider any comments made by you and the person complained about on their proposed decision before deciding whether or not to publish that decision. They will publish the decision if, after taking account of the comments, they considers publication to be in the public interest.

You will be kept informed of the progress of your complaint at every step of the way.

Withdrawal of Complaints

You can withdraw your complaint at any time. This must be done in writing and must be signed by you or your legal representative.

If you withdraw your complaint the Monitoring Officer will notify the person complained about that the complaint has been withdrawn and discontinued.

Appeals

If you are unhappy about the way in which your complaint has been administered, you can lodge an appeal with the Local Government Ombudsman who can be contacted as follows:

Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No. 2, Westwood Way, Westwood Business Park, Coventry, CV4 8JB

Review of Arrangements

These arrangements may be amended by resolution of the full Police Fire and Crime Panel.

Complaints about the Police

The Police and Crime Panel does not handle complaints about the police. If your complaint is about policing or a police officer then you should contact the Police and Crime Commissioner or the Chief Constable for that area. You can contact Staffordshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable as follows:

Police Fire and Crime Commissioner

Telephone: 01785 232385 Email: pfcc@staffordshire.pfcc.pnn.gov.uk
Post: Police Fire and Crime Commissioner
1st Floor, Block 9, Weston Road, Stafford, ST18 0YY

Staffordshire Police Chief Constable

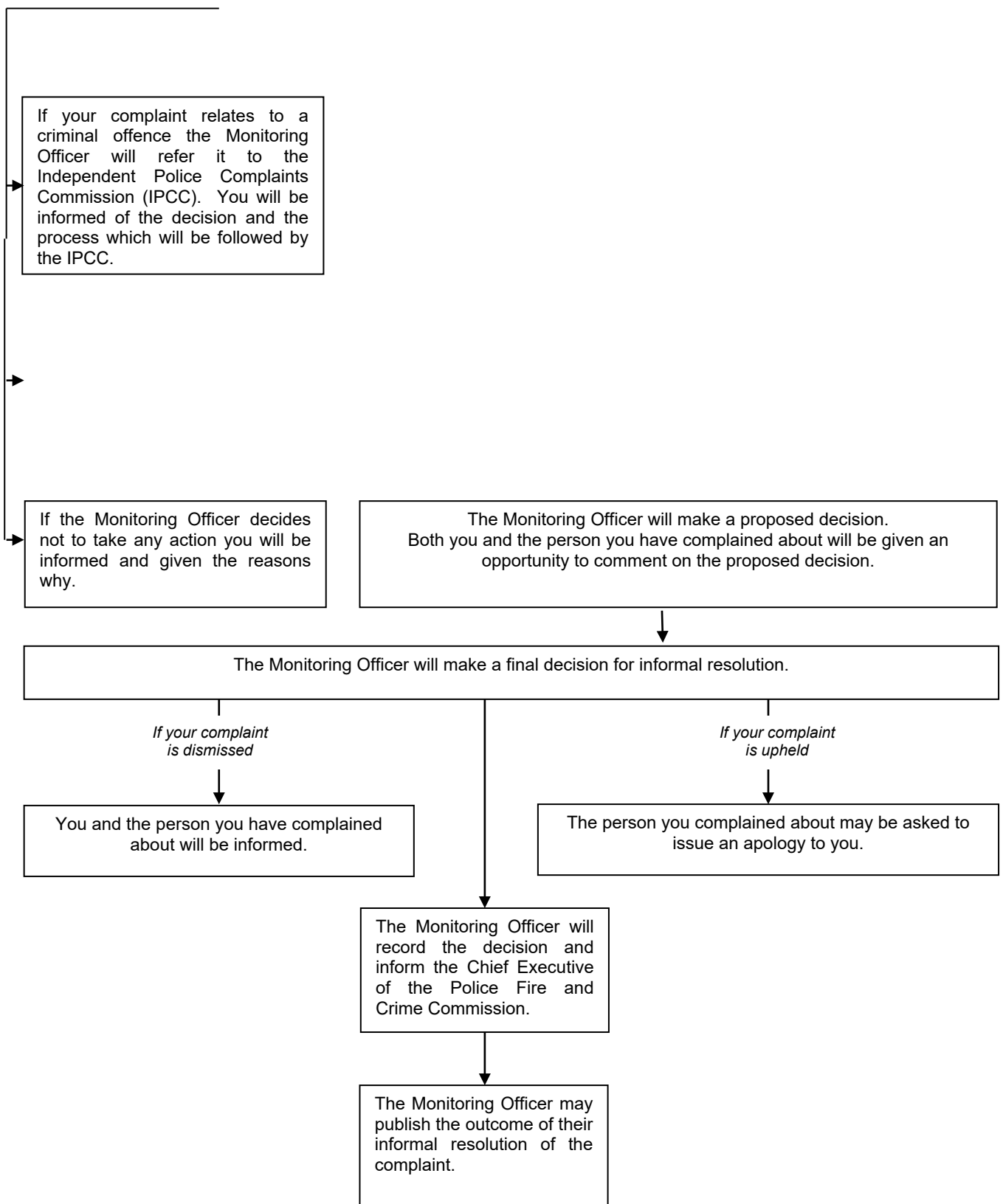
Telephone: 01785 232217 Email: acpo.staffs@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk
Post: Chief Constable
Staffordshire Police Headquarters, PO Box 3167, Stafford, ST16 9JZ

Contact Details

For further information on these arrangements please contact:

Police Fire and Crime Panel Monitoring Officer
Director of Finance and Resources
Member and Democratic Services
Staffordshire County Council
Stafford
ST16 2DH

How to complain about the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner or the Deputy Police Fire and Crime Commissioner



STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

17 November 2025

WORK PROGRAMME PLANNING 2025/26

Report of the Secretary

Recommendation

That the Panel note the dates of future meetings and considers the contents of its future Work Programme.

Background

By Regulation this Panel is required to meet on a *minimum* of 4 occasions each year with the facility to convene additional meetings as and when required.

There are a number of reports/matters which the Panel is required to consider:

Police and Crime Matters: the proposed Policing and Crime Precept each year, the Police and Crime Plan, The Commissioners Annual Report on the delivery of the Plan, Confirmation Hearings for a number of key posts and Reports on the Handling of Complaints.

Fire and Rescue Service Matters: The proposed Fire and Rescue Service Precept each year, the draft Fire and Rescue Plan/Corporate Safety Plan (incorporating the Integrated Risk Management Plan), the Annual Statement of Assurance and Confirmation Hearings for key posts in the Service.

Panel Meeting date	Agenda Items
19 June 2025 10am	Panel training- private meeting
23 June 2025 10am	Panel members - meet the Commissioner and tour Pirehill Fire service facilities
28 July 2025 10am	- Appointment of Chairman - Appointment of Vice-Chairman - Annual Report on the Management of Complaints and Conduct Matters against the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner - Home Officer Grant 2024/25

	• Consideration of the Commissioners Annual Report 2024/25 • Decisions made by the Commissioner. • HMICFRS inspections of Police Force and Fire
22 September 2025 10am	• Police and Crime Plan / Fire and Rescue Plan Update • Fire Safety Plan update- deferred to next meeting • Decisions made by the Commissioner. • Panel review – report of the Chair and Secretary (July 2025 minute 12 • Questions from the public • Chief Constable Suspension – information report
22 September 2025 12.30	• Confirmation Hearing – Section 151 officer – Police
17 November 2025 10am	• MTFS/Budget Update – Policing Service • MTFS/Budget Update - Fire and Rescue Service • Fire and Rescue Annual Assurance Statement • Fire Safety Plan update – deferred from September meeting • Panels processes to deal with complaints against the commissioner. • Decisions made by the Commissioner. • Questions from the public
2 February 2026 10am	• PFCC's proposed Police Budget and Precept 2026/27 • Police and Fire Misconduct and Complaint – annual report • Annual Conference for PFCP's (if held) – report • Decisions made by the Commissioner.
9 February 2026 10am	• Consideration of the PFCCs proposed Fire and Rescue Budget and Precept 2026/27 • Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan - Update Report • Decisions made by the Commissioner
16 February 2026 10 am	If required, further consideration of proposed Police and/or Fire and Rescue Budget and Precept 2026/27
13 April 2026 10am	• Business TBC
Pending items	
1. Custody Suite redevelopment – requested at 28 July meeting – at an appropriate time 2. That a report be considered at a future meeting on Stalking and Domestic Abuse and the work taking place locally. – requested at 22 September meeting minute	

Working Group - update
At its meeting on 22 September, the panel established a working group to review its Terms of reference, policies and procedure. The group has meet on 2 occasions and is working through the documentation.

K Loader (Secretary to the Panel)
Contact Officers: Mandy Pattinson
mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk

