



Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)

Equipment Strategy 2021 - 2031



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NFRS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Keeping our communities safe and well
- Keeping our staff safe and well
- Making the best use of resources

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this equipment strategy is to provide a framework to ensure legally compliant and fit for purpose equipment that supports the requirements of the NFRS [Response Strategy](#), enables delivery of the strategic objectives within the [Fire and Rescue Plan](#) and [Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\)](#) and provides for safe systems of work.

The strategy will inform and underpin the [NFRS Capital Programme](#).

2 GOVERNANCE

The Equipment Strategy is ‘owned’ by the Chief Fire Officer and will be reviewed by the Fire Executive Group (FEG) annually.

Any financial implications must be agreed by the Chief Finance Officer and included within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Once agreed, the Equipment Strategy will be submitted for approval and adoption by the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA).

3 SCOPE

The scope of this strategy encompasses:

- All operational equipment; and
- All non-mobile equipment and/or plant required to support the delivery of services to the community and for the ensuring the effective operation of the organisation.

Out of scope:

- Equipment or plant that forms part of the fabric of the building in which it is contained and therefore would be covered by the estates strategy
- Equipment or plant which is integrated into fire appliances or other response vehicles, which would therefore be covered within the fleet strategy
- Small items of equipment (small tools, shovels etc.) that have a long life and are considered to be consumable items.
- Information Communication Technology (ICT) and communications equipment, which is covered within the [Digital and ICT strategy](#).

4 PRINCIPLES

The equipment strategy is driven by the following overarching principles:

- Operational effectiveness
- Safety
- Efficiency
- Legal compliance
- Value for money
- Protect the environment

Each of these principles is briefly explained below:

Operational effectiveness – NFRS equipment requirements are driven and informed by the [Fire and Rescue Plan](#), the [CRMP](#) and the [Response Strategy](#) whereby known and predicated risks are identified. It must therefore be tailored to meet the countywide risk profile whilst being suitable for the range of duty systems in operation which comprise the strategic fire and rescue cover model.

Safety – This falls into two categories:

- Community safety – ensuring the capability and distribution of equipment appropriately reflects the community risk and is adequately supports the [Standards of Operational Response](#).
- Firefighter safety – ensuring equipment supports current operational doctrine and methods of operation and remains fit for purpose through effective whole-life maintenance and replacement programmes.

Efficiency – The deployment of operational equipment across the county will be informed by risk analysis comprising the strategic fire cover model and by analysis of incident activity and data. This will help ensure an efficient distribution of equipment, matched to community risk, standard of response and maintenance of competencies.

Legal compliance – This will be facilitated through effective equipment management, administration, regularity inspection and testing and maintenance. In addition, equipment use will be underpinned by policies and will reflect all requirements of relevant legislation.

Value for money – Equipment purchases and disposals will be in line with the [Corporate Governance Framework](#).

Wherever possible NCFRA will utilise national frameworks for the procurement of replacement equipment and will opt for 'standard fit' options wherever practicable. Some tailoring is a requirement of meeting NFRS operational requirements and doctrine.

Approach to equipment disposal will seek to achieve the highest return, taking into account any constraints and restrictions arising from national security policies.

Protect the environment – NFRS is cognisant of environmental impacts of its operations and will pay due regard to this in procurement and operation of all equipment and plant.

5 CURRENT POSITION

The Service continues to seek to rectify legacy positions in underfunding that have led to ageing equipment. This strategy will see this legacy addressed in a managed way, applying prioritisation across the first 5 year period focusing on legal compliance and then bringing replacement back into line based on the lifeing policy within the following 7 years. As with all equipment before replacing any capability a review will take place to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and achieves the objectives as set out within this strategy.

In recent years, managing within the aforementioned financial constraints has required measures such as:

- Additional equipment safety assessments to enable extending life beyond sector or service norms and in some instances, beyond manufacturer's recommended periods
- Servicing and recycling of equipment where replacement would normally have taken place
- Providing a strategic capability for the county via selected locations in place of a capability at all operational locations
- Deferring upgrading of operational equipment in line with currently advocated specifications.

Whilst providing a managed solution, this inevitably places additional burdens (and costs) on the maintenance functions and whilst mitigated as far as possible, does not eliminate associated risks.

Available funding will inevitably mean that prioritisation (against the outcomes in this strategy and in delivering the [CRMP](#) whilst ensuring staff and community safety) will be necessary through the life of this strategy.

6 GENERAL APPROACH, KEY ISSUES AND ASSUMPTIONS

The required approach to procurement is set out within the [Corporate Governance Framework](#). At a Service level, business case approval will be progressed through the Service's governance arrangements.

Addressing the aforementioned financial legacy issues and constraints will create resourcing issues in asset management, implementation and training. This will require an intelligence led and consultative approach to undertaking the procurement programme (outlined in [appendix 1](#)).

The Service will continue to engage in relevant regional and national forums to ensure effective and value for money solutions, taking a collaborative approach wherever practicable.

OUTLINE SCHEDULE FOR EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT

The requirement for immediate equipment replacement will exceed available capital and revenue funding for the medium term future, proposals are therefore based upon analysis of need and cost vs benefit and have taken account of all opportunities to extend useable life.

It should be noted that all costings in the plan are in thousands (K) and are estimates based on historical figures uplifted for inflation in year 1, no inflation has been added for future years at this point. They are therefore illustrative and subject to the outcomes of tendering.

Priority 1 - Essential for core functionality and legal compliance

Priority 2 - Maintain service delivery

Priority 3 - Improve service delivery

The [capital plan](#) that accompanies this strategy.

Where items are identified as revenue they will be included in either the appropriate revenue budget or purchased from an equipment revenue reserve.

DISPOSAL PLAN

Alongside the purchase of new equipment, existing equipment will be de-commissioned and disposed of in a planned way.