

PROJECT ASPECT: SERVICE CUTS PROPOSALS

JOINT REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND TREASURER



For Approval

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Cleveland Fire Authority of the outcomes of Project Aspect, an internal project team commissioned to examine and recommend proposals to address the financial deficit.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the methodology employed by Project Aspect to reach the conclusions and recommendations set out within this paper.
- 2.2 To approve the implementation of the following proposals to achieve the savings required, subject to a formal consultation process, to address the forecast budget deficit within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2027/28 and 2028/29, and to authorise the Interim Chief Fire Officer to progress the necessary implementation arrangements:
 - Day Crew E3 (Thornaby Fire Station's second appliance)
 - Covert Water Rescue to a twinned Station model
 - Additional Hours Cap
 - Disturbance Allowance Review
 - East Cleveland Day Cover (Scheduled Model)
 - Flexi Duty Officer Vehicles
 - Light Vehicles
 - Catering arrangements
 - Cleaning of Service Premises
 - Security at Headquarters
 - Printers
 - Ridership Factor
- 2.3 To approve the two-year phased strategy to resolve the deficit of £1.198m. £750k savings will be met in 2027/28, as set out in this report, with the remaining £448k being met through focused management of sickness levels, additional hours expenditure and disturbance allowance payments.

- 2.4 To confirm that these proposals constitute the Authority's approved savings programme for the purposes of developing the 2027/28 revenue budget, with the approved savings to be reflected in the Authority's formal budget-setting reports.
- 2.5 To note the increased risks relating to inflation and national pay may require further cuts, which, if necessary, will be subject to a separate report and consultation.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The development of the 2026/27 to 2028/29 MTFS highlighted the significant financial challenges managed by the Authority in previous years. These issues define the starting point for the development of the cuts recommended in this report. The most significant historic issues being:



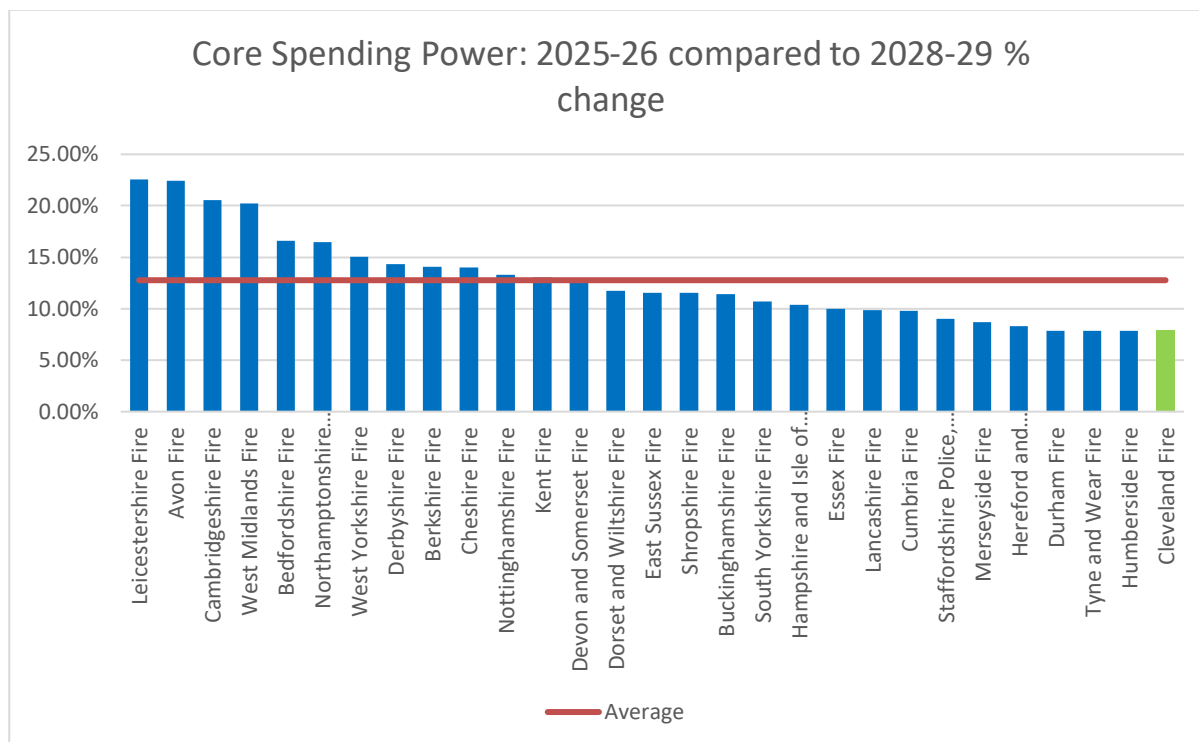
a 33% reduction in the number of **wholetime firefighter posts** from 494 to 331. Compared to national reduction of **25%**.



The 2025/26 budget measure to permanently only budget for 97% of the pay budget to save £0.9m on a recurring basis. This proposal avoided direct services cuts but requires careful management of the staffing establishment.

- 3.2 To provide service context to the above issues:
- National figures for “All Incidents” show the Authority had the highest number of incidents per 100,000 of population for 2024/25; and the second highest number for 2023/24.
 - Local “All Incidents” figures for April to June 2025 show a 64% increase on the same period for 2024, which indicates continued increasing demands on the Authority.
- 3.3 In addition, the three-year settlement (2026/27 to 2028/29) is not favourable for the Authority, although it was not as bad as indicated by the Fair Funding consultation as a result of the specific Floor Funding for FRSs. This was an issue argued strongly for in our response to the Fair Funding consultation.
- 3.4 As summarised in Table 1 below the Authority will only see a **7.9%** increase in Core Spending Power (CSP) over the next three years. Only four other FRSs have similar low CSP increases, including Durham and Darlington, and Tyne and Wear. The average FRSs CSP increase is **12.8%**. The majority of FRSs gain an increase in CSP above **10%** and four gain increases in CSP above **20%**.

Table 1: Fire Service Core Spending Power Comparison



4. FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT UPDATE

- 4.1 The MTFs approved in February 2026 required the Chief Fire Officer to submit a saving plan by July 2026 to identify cuts of **£1.198m**, with **£0.707m** to be implemented from April 2027 and the remaining **£0.491m** from April 2028. These forecasts reflected:

- **The three-year Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 to 2028/29.**

The settlement introduced significant changes in funding which at a national level continues to increase reliance on Council Tax to fund local services. For FRSs this includes a £5 Band D Council Tax referendum limit for three years.

For this Authority, the settlement was not favourable as total Government Funding will be lower in 2028/29 than it was in 2025/26. The reduction would be significantly higher if the Floor Funding Grant had not been introduced. Continuation of this grant (£2.7m in 2028/29) beyond 2028/29 will be critical to the ongoing financial sustainability of the Authority.

In view of the reduction in Government funding the net increase in forecast resources between 2026/27 and 2028/29 will only be achieved if the Government confirms the annual £5 Council Tax limit and the Authority confirms these increases. Without this increased income in 2027/28 and 2028/29 additional budget cuts of **£1.750m** will be required.

Forecast Inflation

At the time, the 2026/27 budget was approved forecasts from the Bank of England, and other economic forecaster, had anticipated inflation reducing during 2026/27 and then returning to the 2% Bank of England target in 2027/28. This position was reflected in Bank of England interest rate decisions which saw Bank Base rate reduce from 5.25% in July 2024 to 3.75% in December 2025, which remains the current interest rate.

On this basis the budget forecasts reflect lower pressure for pay awards in 2027/28 and 2028/29 of 2%. For non-pay expenditure an inflation provision of 3% was maintained for these years on the basis that some contract prices and some goods /services may continue to see higher inflation.

The February 2026 MTFS report highlight the potential risk if pay award and inflation exceeds these forecasts by 1%, in each of the three-years covered by the current MTFS. This risk is considered later in the report.

- 4.2 Table 2 highlights the impact of the issues detailed in the previous paragraphs and shows that annual Council Tax increases in 2027/28 and 2028/29 will increase recurring 2028/29 resources income by **£1.750m** (£0.853m from 2027/28 plus £0.897m from 2028/29). Without this recurring income the forecast deficit of **£1.198m** would increase to **£2.948m**.

Table 2: Forecast Budget Deficits 2026/27 to 2028/29

2025/26 £'m		2026/27 £'m	2027/28 £'m	2028/29 £'m
38.149	Budget Required to standstill	39.554	40.150	41.046
(21.739)	Government Funding/ Business Rates income	(20.954)	(19.848)	(18.647)
0.000	Funding Floor Grant	(1.150)	(1.900)	(2.700)
(0.250)	Investment income	(0.250)	(0.250)	(0.250)
(15.680)	Council Tax income (before 2027/28 and 2028/29 increases)	(16.799)	(16.993)	(17.208)
0.480	Sub Total	0.401	1.159	2.241
n/a	Council Tax increase 2027/27	n/a	(0.853)	(0.853)
n/a	Council Tax increase 2028/29	n/a	n/a	(0.897)
0	Deficit deferred from 2026/27 to 2027/28	(0.401)	0.401	0
0.480	Net Budget Deficit	0.0	0.707	0.491

4.3 Changes in planning assumptions since MTFS approved.

- 4.3.1 The USA/Iran war has resulted in a period of significant financial uncertainty, most notably in relation to oil prices and commodities such as fertilisers costs. This will feed into higher inflation and means that the MTFS forecasts reported in February 2026 will need to be updated.
- 4.3.2 At this stage it is not possible to provide this update as the position remains uncertain as highlighted in the Bank of England's April 2026 Monetary Policy Report which considered three inflation scenarios. The scenarios are based on an assessment of the potential impact of the current energy price shock, the anticipated duration and the extent of second-round effects from the energy shock (i.e. higher pay increases and non-pay inflation):

Table 3: Bank of England CPI Scenarios – April 2026

	2026 Q2	2027 Q2	2028 Q2	2029 Q2
Scenario 1	3.1%	2.9%	1.5%	1.7%
Scenario 2	3.1%	3.2%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 3	3.6%	5.6%	2.9%	2.6%

- 4.4 The existing MTFS forecast will need to be updated to reflect four issues:

- **Impact of higher inflation 2026/27 to 2027/28 on national pay awards**

As pay costs account for approximately 80% of the budget the increased inflation uncertainty is a significant financial risk to the MTFS. In early May, the National Employers organisation surveyed FRSs in relation to the 2026 national pay award for Grey Book (Uniformed staff). A pay offer of 3.8% has since been accepted by the Fire Brigade Union.

At a national level, the Grey Book pay negotiations for 2026 had intended to be extended to include a review of the role of fire-fighters. This work is now expected to be delayed until 2027, which increases uncertainty regarding the potential costs of this review and whether additional Government funding for any agreed national changes is provided.

The position on relation to Green book staff also remains uncertain as the Trade Unions have rejected a 3.3% pay offer and will be balloting members.

For 2027/28 and 2028/29 the existing provisions of 2% now seem to be optimistic. Therefore, it would be prudent to anticipate annual increases for these two years being 1% higher than provided for within the current MTFS forecasts. This situation may increase the existing forecast deficits by £0.6m (i.e. £0.3m per year for each additional 1% increase above the forecast level).

- **Impact of higher inflation 2026/27 to 2027/28 on non-pay costs**

The current MTFS forecasts are based on 3% non-pay inflation for three years. This is sufficient to cover the Bank of England's scenario 1 and 2 inflation forecast.

A 3% non-pay inflation provision is not sufficient to cover the Bank of England's scenario 3 inflation forecast in 2026/27 and 2027/28. Fully funding this difference would increase recurring 2027/28 by £0.270m.

At this stage it is recommended that half of this potential additional inflation is included as a 2027/28 budget pressure – i.e. £0.135m.

The Authority may also face one-off higher energy and fuel prices in 2026/27 and 2027/28 which will depend on the duration of the USA/Iran war and the period of recovery. At this stage, these potential costs cannot be quantified. It is recommended that these one-off cost pressures are funded from one-off resources which will be identified during the year from either in-year managed budget underspends, increased temporary investment income or review of reserves.

- **Impact of higher Interest Rates on Asset Management Plan**

All countries have seen an increase in interest rates for Government borrowing in response to higher inflation forecasts. The UK has seen some of the largest increases because of the energy markets dependency on the price of gas for determining electricity prices, which then feeds into inflation.

The increase in Government interest rates then feeds into the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) interest rates. The Treasury Management Strategy highlighted this potential risk, although not the impact of the USA/Iran war.

The Treasury Management Strategy advised the Authority that the budget is based on a long-term interest rate of 5%. At the time it was recommended that long term borrowing would be delayed until interest rates reduced. As this is no longer likely to be the case over the period of the MTFS this risk needs to be re-assessed.

Current PWLB long term interest rates (15-year loans 6.32%, 40-year loans 6.47%) are higher than forecast when the MTFS was approved. This position increases the risk that the Authority will not be able to borrow at 5% and for planning purposes a 6% rate would be prudent. By delaying borrowing until 2027/28, which will be achieved by offsetting borrowing and investments (in the same way as offset mortgage) the Authority can manage this position. A budget pressure of £50,000 then potentially arises in 2027/28 and a further £25,000 in 2028/29.

- **Impact of higher Interest Rates on Investment income**

The revenue budget uses £0.350m of investment income to support the budget and services (£0.1m recurring and £0.250m temporary up to 2030/31).

The Authority will benefit from higher interest rates on investments, and this will enable the additional income to be either used to:

- Continue existing temporary support of the budget at £0.250m beyond 2030/31; or
- To manage one off financial risk over the period of the current MTFS; or
- To begin to earmark one-off resources to manage the potential risk if the £2.7m Floor Funding Grant does not continue after 2028/29.

It is recommended that a decision on which option or combination of options is deferred until later in the year, when the financial outlook may be less uncertain.

- **Impact on Government Spending Priorities**

The three-year settlement for 2026/27 to 2028/29 provides greater certainty than the previous one-year settlements. There remains potential for the settlement changing:

- **Scenario 1 - increase in funding**

As part of the 2026/27 settlement process the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) successfully argued for a minimum Core Spending Power (CSP) increase of 3.8%, which included all authorities using the £5 Council Tax flexibility. This is the CSP increase for the Authority and reflects the Floor Funding Grant, which will be £2.7m in 2028/29.

With current inflation uncertainty the Government is unlikely to commit to a two-year minimum CSP increase. Therefore, for planning purposes a 3% annual increase is an appropriate planning scenario, although not a guarantee.

- **Scenario 2 – decrease in funding**

The Government may re-open the Spending Review to address the impact of higher interest costs and increased defence expenditure.

Each 1% reduction in Government funding allocated to the Authority is approximately £0.2m

- 4.5 An assessment of the potential impact of the issues detailed in the previous paragraphs is set out in Table 4 below. At this stage three scenario have been modelled. One scenario shows a slight reduction in the forecast deficit Two scenarios show significant potential increases in the forecast deficit of between £0.326m and £0.526m, respectively total forecast potential deficits of **£1.524m** to **£1.724m**

Table 4: Forecast Deficit Scenarios **WITH** annual Band D Council Tax increases of £5 in 2027/28 and 2028/29

	2027/28 £'m	2028/29 £'m	Total £'m
February 2026 Baseline deficit	0.707	0.491	1.198
Scenario 1 - Additional 1% pay pressure per year. - Additional 1% non- pay pressure 2027/28 - Additional 1% Interest cost per year	1.192	0.332	1.524
Scenario 2 - Pay, non-pay and interest pressure as per scenario 1. - Increase in Government Floor Funding Grant to achieve 3% CSP increase per year	0.792	0.332	1.124
Scenario 3 - Pay, non-pay and interest pressure as per scenario 1. 1% Reduction in Grant funding	1.392	0.332	1.724

- 4.6 At this stage it remains appropriate to progress with the saving plan to identify saving of **£1.198m** as mandated by the Authority. If the higher deficits arise a further savings plan will need to be developed. Implementation of this plan may need to be supported in 2027/28 by additional use of the Budget Support Fund, to manage the phasing of further budget cuts.
- 4.7 The above forecasts are based on confirmation of annual Band D Council Tax limits of £5 by the Government, and subsequent approval by the Authority. Without this additional income additional cuts of **£1.750m** will be needed. The impact on the baseline deficit and updated scenarios is detailed below:

Table 5: Forecast Deficit Scenarios **WITHOUT** annual Band D Council Tax increases of £5 in 2027/28 and 2028/29

	2027/28 £'m	2028/29 £'m	Total £'m
February 2026 Baseline deficit	1.560	1.388	2.948
Scenario 1 - Additional 1% pay pressure per year. - Additional 1% non- pay pressure 2027/28 - Additional 1% Interest cost per year	2.045	1.229	3.274
Scenario 2 - Pay, non-pay and interest pressure as per scenario 1. - Increase in Government Floor Funding Grant to achieve 3% CSP increase per year	1.645	1.229	2.874
Scenario 3 - Pay, non-pay and interest pressure as per scenario 1. 1% Reduction in Grant funding	2.245	1.229	3.474

4.8 Government Funding Review

- 4.9 The Government has recently commenced a review of the Fire Funding formula to determine if changes to the existing Fire Funding are needed. Any potential changes will not be implemented until 2029/30 and will therefore not impact on funding over the current MTFS period 2026/27 to 2028/29. The Authority is fully engaging in this process and presenting the Authority's case for fairer funding formula which needs to address risk, deprivation and the Authority's low Council Tax base.

5. PROJECT ASPECT

- 5.1 In January 2026, Cleveland Fire Brigade established Project Aspect in response to the anticipated financial challenges faced by CFB, arising from the Government's proposed Fair Funding Formula for Fire and Rescue Services. The approved MTFS confirmed a recurring budget shortfall of £1.198 million. As detailed earlier in the report there is a risk this figure may increase as a result of higher than forecast inflation owing to international events. The £1.198m represents a significant financial pressure for the Service, particularly given its reliance on Government funding and the socio-economic characteristics of the communities it serves.
- 5.2 Project Aspect was commissioned by the ELT to identify and assess potential savings opportunities across the organisation in a structured, evidence-based and transparent manner. The project sought to ensure that any options developed would support the Brigade's long-term financial sustainability whilst maintaining operational effectiveness, meeting statutory obligations, protecting vulnerable communities and preserving public confidence. The project was specifically designed to avoid reactive short-term reductions and instead provide a robust evidence base to support informed decision-making by ELT and Cleveland Fire Authority.

5.3 Project Scope

- 5.3.1 The project considered expenditure across all functional areas of the Service, including operational service delivery, estates, fleet, support services, contracts, workforce arrangements and duty systems. It was agreed by ELT at project initiation that several boundaries were out of scope which included:
- Fire station closures
 - 24-hour shift patterns
 - Day Crewing Plus
- 5.3.2 In addition, significant organisational restructures, changes to role profiles and other matters that had recently been subject to formal review, were not considered to be part of the project. These parameters ensured the project remained focused on achievable and proportionate options which aligned with the Service's strategic priorities.
- 5.3.3 Other principles were set as part of the project:
- Service integrity must be maintained and ELT wished to prioritise preserving a fire station presence to ensure community safety
 - As noted previously, closing a Fire Station was a 'red line' and therefore removing a second appliance was preferred over closing a Fire Station to minimise operational disruption
 - Day crewing appliances was favoured over removing appliances to maintain resilience and capacity, whilst reducing costs
 - Cost and safety needs to be balanced, through financial responsibility, to maintain the principles of resourcing to risk
 - Operational configuration within East Cleveland was also to be considered due to long response times, highlighted in the modelling work that had been conducted by Operational Research in Health (ORH)
- 5.4 An extensive engagement process was undertaken to identify potential opportunities and to bring forward implementable proposals as details later in the report. This approach sought to engage the workforce and to identify potential proposals which may not otherwise have been identified. However, the process of identifying savings needs to recognise that nearly 80% of the budget relates to staffing costs, which reduces the scope for "easy" budget savings.
- 5.5 Following a recruitment process extended to the entire workforce, four members of staff were seconded to be part of the multi-disciplinary project team (role prior to the project team and substantive position shown below)
- Group Manager: Head of Operational Policy and Planning
 - Station Manager: National Operational Guidance
 - Grade E: Operational Assurance Officer
 - Watch Manager: Training Centre Instructor
- 5.6 The project was conducted within a formal governance framework with sponsorship provided by the Assistant Director of Governance and Assurance, supported by a dedicated Project Manager and multidisciplinary project team. The underlying principle throughout was to provide a clear, transparent and auditable evidence base for future decision-making by ELT and the Fire Authority.

6. PROJECT ASPECT METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 Project Aspect adopted a structured and consistent assessment methodology to ensure that all proposals were considered fairly, transparently and on an evidence-based basis. Every proposal was recorded within a central considerations log and subjected to the same assessment process, regardless of origin.
- 6.2 To support robust decision-making, the project team commissioned detailed work packages from appropriately identified subject matter experts across the organisation. These work packages gathered detailed information relating to financial costs, operational performance, workforce impacts, fleet utilisation, estates provision, contracts, risk and statutory responsibilities. Proposals were only considered once the relevant evidence had been gathered and reviewed.
- 6.3 Project governance arrangements required all decisions to be reached through formal project team discussions. A minimum of three project team members were required to be present, with decisions recorded in a formal decision log together with supporting rationale. This created a clear audit trail and ensured transparency, consistency and accountability throughout the assessment process.
- 6.4 A key feature of the methodology was the incorporation of an explicit ethical framework. Alongside financial and operational considerations, proposals were assessed for potential impacts on staff, communities, equality, fairness, transparency and vulnerable groups. Ethical implications were recorded and reviewed throughout the project to ensure savings opportunities were considered alongside the Brigade's wider social and public service responsibilities. This was further supported by the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment for the project.
- 6.5 The project was delivered using PRINCE2 project management principles and supported by operational modelling undertaken by Operational Research in Health (ORH), financial analysis, subject matter expert evidence and documented assumptions. This provided a comprehensive and auditable evidence base from which the Authority can consider the options presented.
- 6.6 Considerations
- 6.6.1 The considerations covered a broad spectrum of activity, including operational delivery, workforce arrangements, estates and assets, fleet and equipment, contracts, and corporate support functions. This ensured that both front-line service delivery and wider organisational costs were examined in a consistent and structured way.
- 6.6.2 Each consideration was assessed using the project's agreed methodology, considering potential financial savings, operational impact, deliverability, equality and ethical considerations, organisational risk and any legal or regulatory implications. Information to support this process was gathered through a series of structured work packages with subject matter experts, enabling decisions to be based on evidence rather than assumption.

- 6.6.3 A proportion of considerations were closed at an early stage. This was typically due to limited or unsustainable financial benefit, requirements for significant capital investment, duplication of existing work, or because the potential impact on operational effectiveness, staff welfare, or community safety outweighed any savings that could be achieved.
- 6.6.4 Where considerations demonstrated sufficient potential, they progressed to the two-stage assessment process:
- Initial Feasibility Assessment (fifteen considerations were assessed)
 - Detailed Feasibility Assessment (eight proposals were assessed)

This staged approach ensured that analytical effort was focused proportionately on options with the greatest potential to contribute to the Service's financial challenges whilst maintaining operational effectiveness.

6.7 Initial Feasibility Assessment (IFA)

- 6.7.1 Fifteen considerations advanced to the IFA stage. The IFA provided a high-level evaluation of each proposal and considered:
- Potential savings
 - Alignment to strategic objectives
 - Impact against the Service's strategic pillars
 - Equality and ethical considerations
 - Operational complexity
 - SWOT and PESTLE analysis
 - Deliverability and risk
- 6.7.2 Each consideration was given a designated project officer, establishing accountability and ownership for producing a thorough, fact-based evaluation. Officers were responsible for investigating the financial, operational, and strategic implications of their assigned proposal, consulting with pertinent subject matter experts, and conducting in-depth research. After the findings were formally presented to the project group, they underwent organised assessment, challenge, and group scrutiny before a decision was made about the proposal's advancement.
- 6.7.3 Every proposal was subjected to an open and uniform methodology that included an operational impact, deliverability, risk, and financial assessment. Savings potential was categorised from minimal through to transformational, supported by wider analysis including PESTLE and SWOT to ensure that legal, social, environmental and organisational factors were fully considered alongside financial benefit.
- 6.7.4 Although several considerations were discounted due to limited financial benefit. Legal and ethical risk or requiring investment, other IFAs identified credible opportunities for meaningful annual savings and progressed to the next stage (Detailed Feasibility Assessment).

6.8 Detailed Feasibility Assessment (DFA)

- 6.8.1 A total of eight considerations progressed to DFA, reflecting those areas where initial analysis indicated the strongest potential for financial savings.

- 6.8.2 Each DFA built on the findings of its corresponding IFA, moving from high-level appraisal to detailed, evidence-based evaluation. This involved analysing current provision, utilisation, cost drivers and contractual arrangements, as well as developing and analysing practical options for change.
- 6.8.3 While each assessment was structured according to the nature of the subject area, all were designed to ensure proposals were thoroughly examined, evidenced and capable of supporting informed decision-making. Factors considered included the examination of:
- Current utilisation and service provision
 - Cost drivers and financial modelling
 - Operational consequences
 - Workforce implications
 - Contractual arrangements
 - Alternative delivery models
 - Risk mitigation measures; and
 - Practical implementation considerations.

7. PROJECT ASPECT OPTIONS REPORT

- 7.1 The final options report was presented to ELT in June 2026
- 7.2 The report was divided into two sections:
- Proposals resulting in efficiencies which when implemented result in smaller savings with minor disruption to the Service
 - Operational configuration changes impacting on response arrangements (requiring the approval of the Fire Authority)
- 7.3 ELT considered the report, taking a balanced and proportionate approach, considering risk, service disruption, reversibility, and cost.
- 7.4 The East Cleveland modelling was also analysed to identify a solution to data presented within the ORH modelling report.

8. OPERATIONAL CONFIGURATION MODELLING

- 8.1 As part of the development of the CRMP 2026-2030, in March 2025, ELT commissioned Operational Research in Health Ltd (ORH) to undertake a Fire Cover Review to support the planning of resource across the county.
- 8.2 The key objectives of the project were to:
- Analyse the current service profile and create and setup appropriate models of fire cover
 - Use simulation modelling to model various pump modelling scenarios
 - Use optimisation models to determine the optimal deployment of CFB appliances at existing locations and to identify the optimal locations for individual stations

- Identify optimal configurations for efficiency savings across several cost envelopes
- To model bespoke configurations to generate options for change within service
- Investigate the use and effectiveness of Small Fire Units

8.3 Data and performance over the last five years was analysed by ORH including demand, response standards and performance.

8.4 In August 2025, the final report was presented to ELT which included:

- Pump modelling
- Small Fire Units
- Location optimisation
- Efficiency Savings
- Bespoke scenarios

8.5 The modelling performed by ORH demonstrated:

- CFB maintains some of the fastest response times nationally under its current configuration
- That demand is heavily concentrated in the urban centres of Middlesbrough, Stockton, Grangetown and Hartlepool
- That East Cleveland is the area with the slowest first-appliance attendance times, materially below Brigade standards
- That uneven on-call availability affects response reliability, particularly during core daytime hours
- That certain wholetime second appliances have limited marginal impact on overall performance when measured against first-pump attendance contributions.

8.6 In terms of the operational configuration of wholetime pumps several options were considered to meet the efficiencies required, in line with the principles set by ELT.

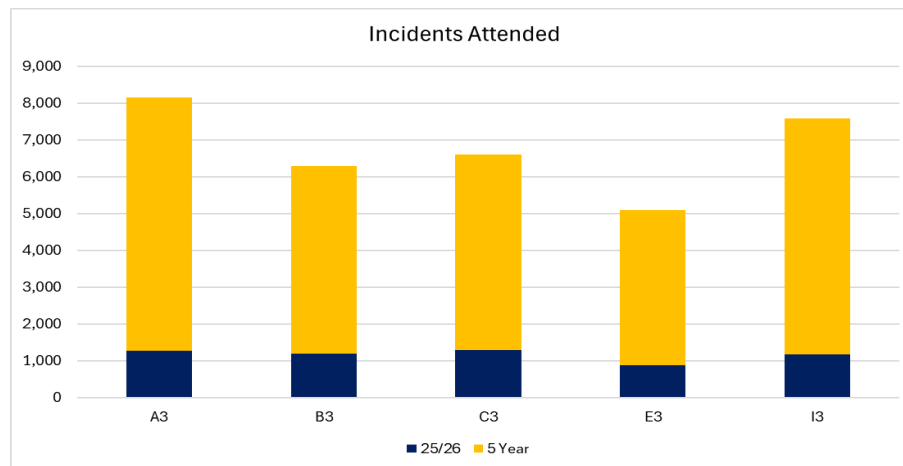
8.7 A Wholetime appliance removal realises the greatest savings, however this option presents a risk in terms of operational resilience and due to the numbers of staff involved may result in redundancies. Therefore, this option is not recommended as part of the current proposals.

8.8 Day crewing a second appliance (at a two pump Station) is considered be the lowest risk option and has the least impact on response standards.

9. SAVINGS/ EFFICIENCIES PROPOSALS

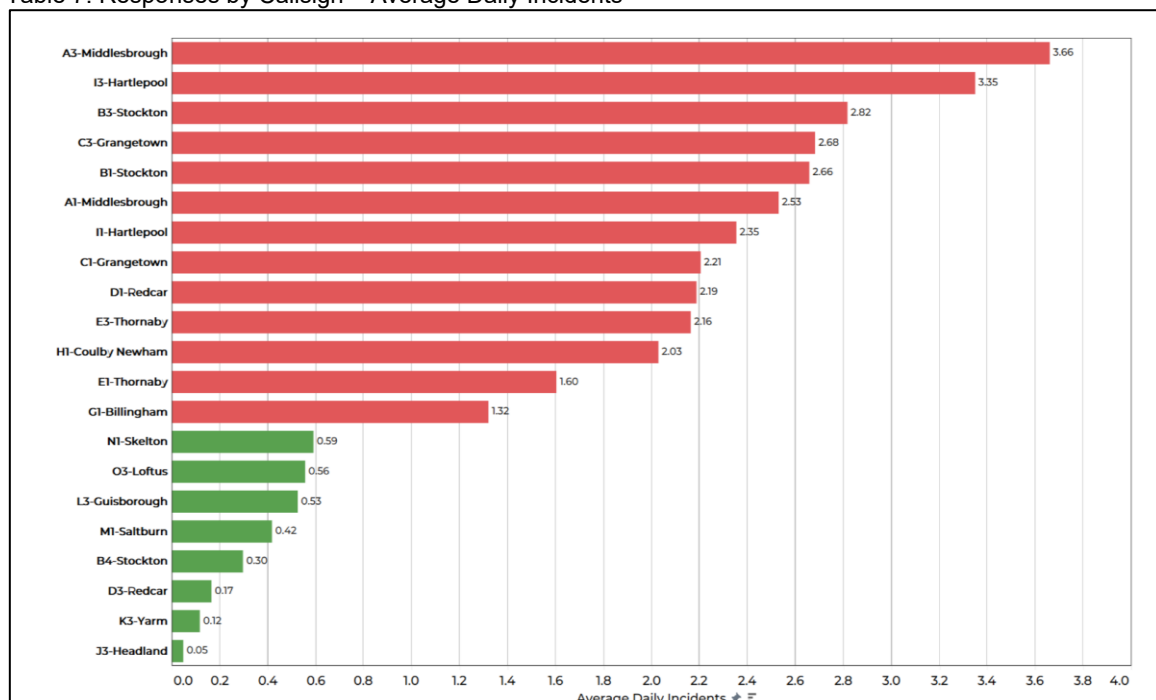
9.1 **Day Crew E3 (Thornaby Fire Station's 2nd appliance)**
Saving: £484,000

9.1.1 Incident data in Table 6 shows that the appliances (2nd pump) located at Middlesbrough (A3), Stockton (B3), Hartlepool (I3) and Grangetown (C3) operate at broadly similar levels of demand, each attending approximately 1,150 to 1,300 incidents during 2025/26. In contrast, E3 attended significantly fewer incidents (873 in 2025/26), indicating a notably lower level of operational demand. This trend is consistent across the five-year period from 2021 to 2026.

Table 6: Incidents attended by 2nd appliances at two pump stations

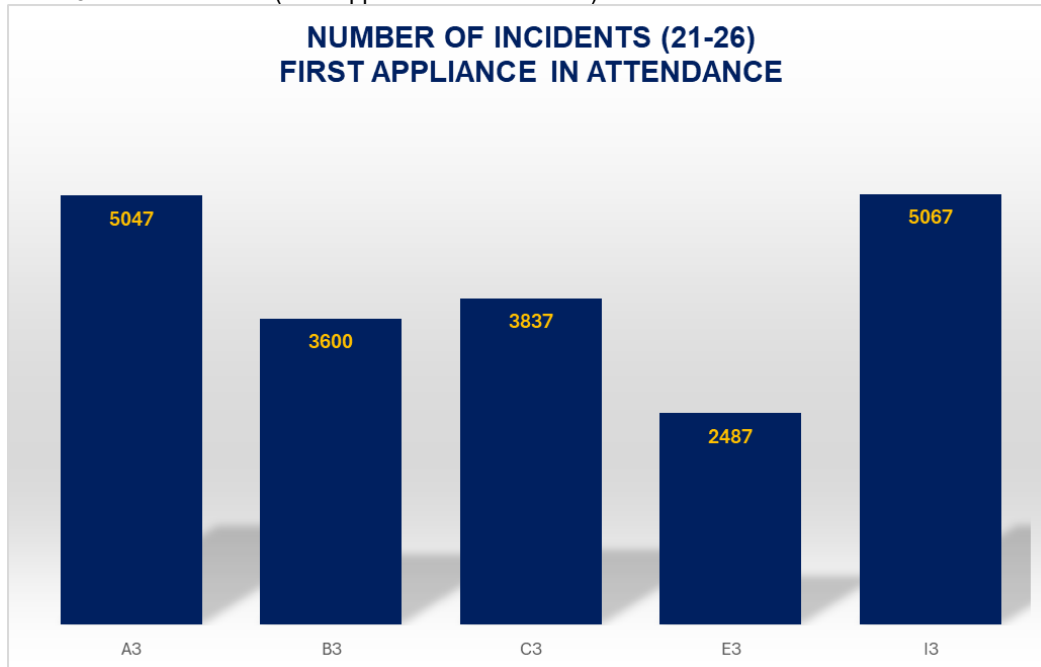
9.1.2 Table 7 shows the average number of daily incidents attended by each appliance in CFB. It should be noted that E3 has the lowest daily rate compared to other '2nd' appliances.

Table 7: Responses by Callsign – Average Daily Incidents



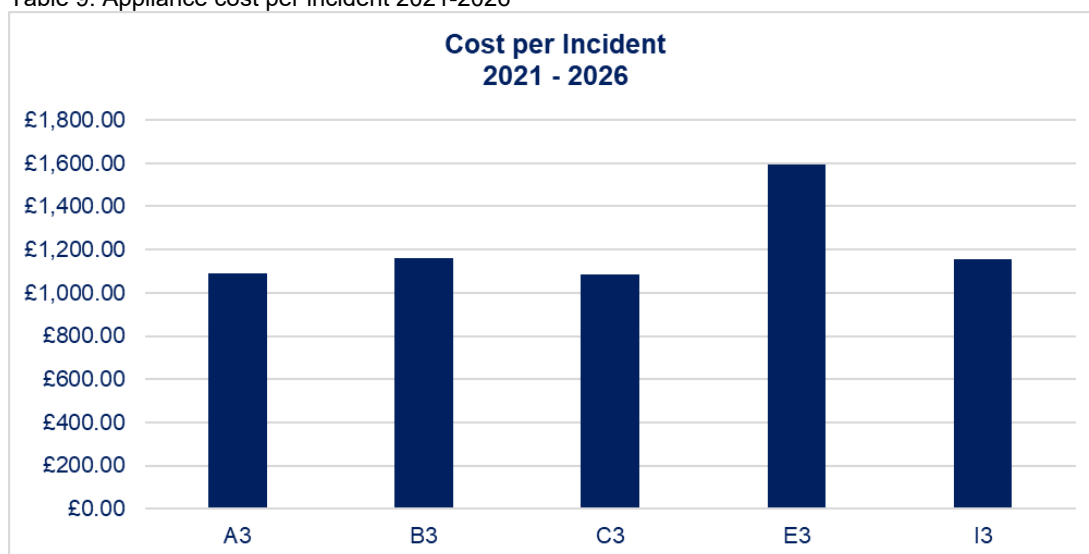
- 9.1.3 Analysing the incidents (Table 8) where 2nd pump appliances are first in attendance, a clear variation in demand is evidenced with A3 and I3 attending the highest number of first appliance incidents, in comparison to E3 with the lowest utilisation as a first responding appliance.

Table 8: No. of Incidents (First appliance in attendance)



- 9.1.4 Table 9 shows the cost per incident measured over a five-year period (2021-2026) providing a useful measure of operational efficiency across the second appliance fleet. The analysis shows that C3 (£1,083) and A3 (£1,090) are the most cost-efficient appliances, while B3 (£1,159) and I3 (£1,181) sit within a mid-range position. In contrast, E3 (£1,592) is significantly less efficient on a cost-per-incident basis.

Table 9: Appliance cost per incident 2021-2026



- 9.1.5 Based on the evidence, the recommended proposal is for E3 to change the staffing from 24/7 to day crewing. This results in a reduction in the establishment of eight wholetime firefighter posts equating to approximately £484,000 (inclusive of employer's national insurance and pension costs).
- 9.1.6 In practice, this results in Thornaby Fire Station reducing the establishment from 44 to 36 wholetime staff. The crewing arrangements would be as follows:
- 4 Watch Managers
 - 8 Crew Managers
 - 24 Firefighters

This comprises of:

- 4 Watch Managers, 4 Crew Managers, and 16 Firefighters operating on the current 2-2-4 duty system working a 9-hour day shift and 13 hour night shift.
- 4 Crew Managers and 8 Firefighters assigned to a two-watch day duty system working 12-hour shifts

9.2. **Twin Water Rescue with Stockton Fire Station**

- 9.2.1 Thornaby Fire Station provides the Service's primary water rescue capability for Water Rescue. Alongside two pumping appliances there is a Specialist Water Rescue Unit (E4) and a boat (E0). The team is also listed on the National Resilience Asset Register as a 'Type C' team defined as *'a water and flood rescue technician team capable of technical water rescue, search operations within the water environment, in water operations, non-powered boat operations, and flood response.'*
- 9.2.2 It is proposed to twin the water rescue capability with Stockton Fire Station and relocate the Water Rescue Vehicle (E4) to Stockton Fire Station. Any incident requiring a water rescue capability will result in a joint mobilisation, simultaneously, from Stockton Fire Station and Thornaby Fire Station. Stockton crews will provide the land-based response using qualified Swift Water Rescue Technicians and Thornaby (qualified) crews will launch the water rescue boat. There will be no delay of water rescue resources.
- 9.2.3 The new arrangements will require some transfers of personnel between Thornaby Fire Station and Stockton Fire Station. Additional training will also be required to upskill Stockton Fire Station staff to provide the water rescue capability resilience.
- 9.2.4 Minimum competence, supervisory and National Resilience requirements will continue to be met.
- 9.2.5 This proposal still maintains the specialist capability within the Service, aligns assets and skills into a clear operating model, whilst providing flexibility and resilience across the two locations.

9.3 **Additional Hours Cap**

- 9.3.1 Currently, whenever staffing for a shift (for wholetime firefighters) drops below minimum (52 staff), a request for annualised hours is sent to both wholetime and on call staff.
- 9.3.2 Under Local Agreement No.12, Sub Agreement No.7 additional hours worked by operational firefighters are at the normal rate of pay. This does not apply to Public Holiday days which will continue to qualify for overtime in accordance with Grey Book terms and conditions.
- 9.3.4 The annualised hours spend in 2025/26 was £593,000 (£204,000 was for Public Holidays). The explanation of why the spend is so high is due to sustained high levels of sickness and the number of (and correct) skillsets of firefighters required to staff the appliances.
- 9.3.5 To address the sickness issue, a priority has been set within the Service Plan 2026/27 to:
‘Evaluate and enhance the current sickness absence and welfare management arrangements by developing and delivering training for managers and implementing clear, consistent processes that strengthen support, consistent management, and improved sickness absence outcomes’
- 9.3.6 As an alternative to the current arrangements of the staffing logistics for every shift being performed by Station Managers, a secondment opportunity will be offered for the position of a dedicated staffing officer who will:
- Apply a consistent approach to staffing
 - Ensure the staff with the relevant skills are in the correct location at the right time
 - Ensure additional hours are allocated in advance shift-by-shift
 - Ensure additional hours are profiled across the year against demand
 - Closely monitor additional hours spend throughout the year ensuring that we are able to stay within financial tolerances whilst also allowing flexibility to align with operational requirements
- 9.3.7 In consultation with the Treasurer and the Head of Finance a financial ‘cap’ will be placed on additional hours (amount to be determined), to reduce the spend on additional hours. As noted in 9.3.7, the staffing officer and in addition the finance department will monitor this to take account of demand and other factors throughout the year that impact on overtime.

9.4 **Disturbance Allowance Review**

- 9.4.1 Firefighters often need to work at various locations through the Service, predominantly due to sickness absences or because they have a certain skillset that is required, this is defined as a ‘detachment’ – *‘a single shift working from a different location from an employee’s normal station.’*

- 9.4.2 The arrangements are set out within Local Agreement 22, negotiated in April 2024, between CFB and Cleveland FBU. Various scenarios are set out including length of time of the detachment, which results in the member of staff being able to claim up to £41 (Firefighter rate).
- 9.4.3 The Disturbance Allowance Costs for 2025/26 were £202,000 approximately.
- 9.4.4 The current policy on disturbance allowances is generous, in comparison to other Services and the arrangements appear for how to claim appear to be unclear. It is proposed a review is undertaken of Local Agreement 22 to ensure it is clear, consistent and managed appropriately and also to review whether the current allowance amount is still appropriate.
- 9.4.5 The review will clarify terminology and eligibility and improve understanding across the workforce enabling consistent application.
- 9.5. **East Cleveland Day Cover (scheduled model)**
- 9.5.1 Analysis conducted by ORH showed the availability of the four On Call Stations in East Cleveland (Guisborough, Saltburn, Skelton and Loftus), alongside their average response standards.
- 9.5.2 Average availability for the four Fire Stations (combined) and their respective pumps for 2025/26 is 62%. The average response standard for the first appliance to building fires (four Fire Stations combined) is 8 minutes 30 seconds. Within our CRMP 2026-2030, our response standard to building fires is:
- *First Fire Appliance arrives at Building Fires in an average of 7 minutes (from the time mobilised)*
- 9.5.3 Currently to maintain standards of fire cover in East Cleveland, when two On Call appliances are unavailable either personnel are detached or a wholetime appliance is moved into the area. Quite often this is short notice and causes disruption to wholetime Fire Stations in terms of planned arrangements, training, prevention and protection activities, notwithstanding there is a cost element due to disturbance allowance/ overtime claimed.
- 9.5.4 To improve availability and average response standard, bespoke scenarios were modelled by ORH, which included re locating a wholetime appliance into East Cleveland, including for both day cover only and 24/7 cover.
- 9.5.5 Following consideration by ELT and balancing community safety against costs, it is proposed to introduce a trial for twelve months (commencing 1st January 2027), for a structured daily deployment model (day shift only) to East Cleveland with a different 'second pump' allocated each day to ensure fairness and an equal distribution of activities. Advanced notice of deployments will negate the claim of disturbance payments and core activities will be performed by the wholetime crew. The appliance will be deployed to whichever On Call Station has the least availability.

9.6. Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) Response Vehicles

Saving: £113,000

9.6.1 This proposal considers two elements:

- Purchase or lease FDO vehicles
- Number of FDO vehicles

9.6.2 FDOs operate under the Flexible Duty System (FDS), which requires officers to provide managerial oversight during daytime hours and maintain an on-call response capability outside these times. At CFB, this system is structured around four groups of five officers, rotating on a four-week cycle. Each week, officers switch between weekday on-call, weekend on-call, and normal managerial duties. This structure ensures that a suitably qualified officer is always available to assume the role of Incident Commander within the command structure, supported by additional officers who can provide resilience for concurrent or protracted incidents, or deliver specialist functions such as welfare and monitoring roles.**9.6.3 CFB supports FDO readiness by assigning each officer a dedicated response vehicle. These vehicles are equipped with blue lights, communications equipment, and full CFB and high visibility livery. They also carry personal protective equipment (PPE) and, where required, specialist equipment such as water rescue or fire investigation kit. Currently, these vehicles are individually allocated, officers take them home, allowing immediate mobilisation during evenings, nights, and weekends (when on call).****9.6.4 Only five Officers are on duty at any one time with the remainder of the officers providing resilience should they be called upon to attend large incidents.****9.6.5 Vehicle Purchase versus Lease:**

Vehicles purchased through the Government Commercial Agency attract substantial discounts, and the evidence from the second-hand market indicates that depreciation over a three-year period is significantly lower than the cost of leasing comparable vehicles. At this point, the Service may wish to sell the vehicles, potentially recouping the initial purchase price, or keep the vehicles for several further years. Although ownership introduces responsibilities related to servicing, maintenance, and out-of-warranty repairs, these risks are considered manageable when weighed against the potential financial benefits and the operational consistency this model offers. However, leasing the vehicles places the burden of servicing and other maintenance costs of the lease company with the option of the vehicle being handed back after three years.

9.6.6 Number of Vehicles:

As stated in 8.1.4, only five FDOs are on duty at any one time. The option of purchasing/ leasing ten vehicles (a reduction of ten) will be explored to reduce costs. Five vehicles would be in use for the officers on duty (for immediate deployment), whilst the remaining five would be used for resilience for officers to use for larger incidents (if required).

9.7. Light Vehicles

Saving: £43,000

- 9.7.1 The Service owns vehicles described as 'light vehicles'. These vehicles comprise of non-blue light vehicles used by departments, pool vehicles and Station transport.
- 9.7.2 Upon analysis, it has been determined that a significant proportion of the fleet is underutilised. The Service continues to incur maintenance, insurance, and running costs for vehicles that are not regularly required.
- 9.7.3 Reducing the number of vehicles within the fleet could remove between 25%-50% of vehicles with underutilisation. The assessment found that reducing fleet size offers the greatest immediate opportunity for savings, with utilization data indicating that a substantial number of vehicles could be removed without materially affecting operational capability.
- 9.7.4 Additional savings could be achieved by extending the lifespan of low-mileage vehicles and deferring planned replacement expenditure. Where additional capacity is required, short-term vehicle hire may provide a flexible and cost-effective solution aligned to actual demand.

9.8. Catering arrangements

Saving: £40,000

- 9.8.1 The catering arrangements regarding the training course catering provision was analysed by the project team. This is funded through an annual budget of £60,800. The provision covers free meals for personnel attending qualifying training courses, including both Wholtime and On-Call initial training, alongside wider course delivery across the organisation.
- 9.8.2 Over the past five years, the catering budget has increased from £40,000 to £60,800, despite relatively low utilisation, with an average of 7.74 attendees per course.
- 9.8.3 The analysis identifies several inefficiencies within the current model. Meals are pre-booked and paid for in advance, meaning cancellations or non-attendance still incur cost. In these instances, the organisation also pays again when individuals are rebooked, resulting in duplicated expenditure. This has been identified as a key driver of poor value for money.
- 9.8.4 There is no statutory requirement for Fire and Rescue Services to provide meals during training; however, there is a recognised welfare expectation, particularly for physically demanding initial training courses.
- 9.8.5 Several options were considered, with the preferred being to provide course delegates with a main meal provision only, which offers a balance approach between financial savings and an appropriate level of staff welfare provision. The utilisation of the staffing officer (detailed in 9.3.7) will ensure further savings on duplicate meal costs?

9.9. Cleaning of Service Premises

Saving: £13,000

- 9.9.1 CFB currently outsources cleaning to an external provider at a contracted cost of £230,956 for 2026-2027 (excluding consumables). Since the contract was first awarded in 2019, annual costs have increased by 56.8% (£83,678). When consumables and kitchen deep clean are included, total annual expenditure is estimated at £242,698.
- 9.9.2 The current contract delivers 220.30 hours of cleaning per week across the Service. Analysis indicates inefficiencies within the existing model, including low-hour contracts, inconsistencies in service frequency and provision of cleaning at times and locations where building occupancy is low.
- 9.9.3 Two feasible options were assessed including bringing the cleaning service in-house and reducing service frequency.
- 9.9.4 The preferred option is to review the frequencies of the cleaning contract, including cleaning at Headquarters and reduced provision at On Call Fire Stations.

9.10 Security at Headquarters

Saving: £50,000

- 9.10.1 The Service currently contracts for a physical security guard to provide out of hours security at the Headquarters site. This coverage operates each weekday evening from 17:00 through to 08:30 the following morning, and continuously from 17:00 on Friday until 08:30 on Monday. The arrangement is based solely on labour provision and does not include any associated equipment or materials. In addition to core security responsibilities, the guard also undertakes a range of ancillary tasks. These include activities such as rubbish removal, winter maintenance duties, and providing assistance with certain deliveries, which, while operationally useful, sit outside the primary security function.
- 9.10.2 The annual cost of this contract for 2026/27 is £110k representing a continued upward trend since the contract was first established.
- 9.10.3 While the presence of a physical guard supports visibility and provides reassurance, the analysis highlighted that many of these outcomes are not solely dependent on on-site personnel. It recognised that a combination of technological measures, such as CCTV systems, access control solutions, alarm systems, and remote monitoring, could also deliver these security functions effectively.
- 9.10.4 In preparation of reviewing (and the potential removal of) the contract the Service commissioned a security assessment of the site to be performed by a regional counter terrorism security advisor. The report highlighted areas whereby security could be strengthened, however it does not advocate for requirement for a 24-hour physical presence on the site.
- 9.10.5 Several options were considered, with the recommended option being to review and remove the contract and strengthen elements of the security on the site.

9.11 Printers

Saving: £7,000

- 9.11.1 Printer hardware and consumables are provided through a single managed print and operating lease arrangement procured under a framework. The current contract costs include device lease charges, servicing, maintenance, and consumables through cost per page pricing.
- 9.11.2 The current printer estate has developed without a standard allocation model, resulting in inconsistent distribution and clear overprovision in several locations. Analysis demonstrates that print volumes are significantly below typical industry capacity, with some sites operating multiple devices despite very low usage.
- 9.11.3 Following analysis, the preferred option is to rationalise device numbers provides a low-risk opportunity to deliver recurring savings, improve consistency across sites, and maintain access to essential printing facilities.

9.12 Ridership Factor

Potential Saving: £242,000 - £483,000

- 9.12.1 The Ridership Factor is a measure used by fire and rescue services to calculate how many operational firefighters are required to consistently crew frontline fire engines. The ridership factor accounts for both predictable and unpredictable abstractions from duty, such as annual leave, sickness, off-station training, modified duties, and unplanned events.
- 9.12.2 The ridership factor determines how many firefighters are needed for each riding position. It should be calculated using a combination of semi-fixed data, such as the number of riding positions and the number of shifts per year; and variable data, including sickness levels and training requirements. The modelling completed as part of Project Aspect sets out how this factor is calculated and illustrates the relationship between staffing levels, shifts delivered, and the number of days available for absence. For clarity, this only relates solely to wholetime personnel.
- 9.12.3 CFB currently operates a four-watch duty system across its wholetime fire stations. To crew 13 frontline fire engines, the service requires 52 riders per shift. The current establishment per watch stands at 73, which generates a ridership factor of 1.40. In practice, this means that for everyone riding position on an appliance, the Service employs 1.40 firefighters to provide resilience against leave, sickness, and other abstractions. Despite this level of staffing, the expected resilience has not been achieved. The Service continues to rely heavily on overtime to maintain appliance availability, and wholetime fire engine availability remains lower than desired.
- 9.12.4 Based on the figures noted in 8.6.3 above, with an establishment of 73 staff per (coloured) Watch and a minimum of 52 staff required to crew fire appliances the Service should have 21 staff members available each day (excluding leave)
- 9.12.5 The '.4' element of incorporates annual leave, sickness and other reasons for staff being absent such as training courses, maternity leave, paternity leave, trade union leave etc.

- 9.12.6 Benchmarking indicates that the Service continues to operate above several neighbouring services, suggesting there remains scope for efficiency improvement. Initial modelling indicated that reducing the ridership factor could deliver significant recurring savings of up to approximately £500k per year. Table 10 shows the ridership factor set against the establishment and absences and potential savings.

Table 10: Ridership Factor v Establishment v Savings

Ridership Factor (Vs 52)	Total Establishment (4 Watches)	Watch Establishment	Leave Required Per Shift	Available To Ride	Resilience above 52	Post Reduction	Saving (£60,449 Per Post)
1.40	292	73	13	60	8	0	0
1.38	288	72	12-13	59-60	7-8	4	241,796
1.36	284	71	12-13	58-59	6-7	8	483,592

- 9.12.7 Further detailed analysis has shown that current absence levels across the organisation are such that these theoretical savings are not achievable in practice without introducing unacceptable risks to operational resilience. In the context of existing absence rates, a reduction in the ridership factor would increase reliance on overtime and dynamic staffing measures, rather than deliver sustainable efficiencies.

- 9.12.8 Table 11 shows the current position evidencing the last 12 months of data, in relation to leave sickness, other reasons for absence and the number of people actually available.

Table 11: Establishment v Annual Leave v Sickness v No. People available

	Establishment	Number of People Available for all absences	Number of People on Annual Leave	Number of People on Sickness Absence	Number of People on Other Absence (4%)	Total number of People Absent	Number of Additional People Available
Current Absence Rates	73	21	13	9 (12%)	3	25	- 4
Reduced Absence Rates	73	21	13	5 (6%)	3	21	0

- 9.12.9 While the current model provides approximately 40% additional staffing above minimum riding requirements, this does not consistently translate into operational resilience. Appliance availability continues to be supported through overtime, and the ridership factor is not currently subject to dedicated ownership, governance, or active management. This limits the Service's ability to maximise the benefit of its existing establishment.
- 9.12.10 Benchmarking indicates that the Service continues to operate above several neighbouring services, suggesting there remains scope for efficiency improvement. However, rather than pursuing reductions in establishment at this stage, the Executive Leadership Team proposes to prioritise a focused and sustained reduction in absence levels across the organisation. This approach is intended to improve workforce availability, strengthen operational resilience, and create a more stable foundation from which future efficiency opportunities can be assessed.

- 9.12.11 Overall, while opportunities to reduce establishment costs were initially identified, current absence levels mean that this is not a viable option at present. Delivering improved attendance and workforce availability is therefore the key enabler for any future consideration of sustainable savings.

10. STAFF ENGAGEMENT

- 10.1 The Interim Chief Fire Officer and two Assistant Chief Fire Officers met with the Fire Brigades Union on Monday 29th June regarding the proposals. Middle Managers were informed on the same day, and visits were conducted at both Thornaby and Stockton Fire Stations by ELT members on the evening Monday 29th June, to speak with the two Watches on duty and shift changeover. This was replicated on Thursday 2nd July at 6pm for the remaining two shifts. At the weekly Communications Forum on Friday 3rd July the Interim Chief Fire Officer presented the proposals.
- 10.2 On Monday 13th and Tuesday 14th July, the four East Cleveland Fire Stations were visited by members of ELT to engage and inform staff regarding the proposals, specifically the East Cleveland wholetime appliance proposed arrangements
- 10.3 **During all the engagement sessions, it was emphasised the proposals were subject to the approval of Cleveland Fire Authority at the meeting on 24th July 2026**
- 10.4 An alternative suggestion was received from a member of staff following one of the engagement sessions which involved 'day crewing' Billingham Fire Station and moving an appliance to provide cover for the evening shift. After careful consideration by ELT, it was decided this option is not viable due to potential future configurations.

11. TOTAL SAVINGS

- 11.1 Table 12 shows the approximate cost savings from the efficiencies set out within Section 9.

Table 12: Proposals v Savings

Proposal	Savings
Day Crewing	£484,000
Flexi Duty Officer Vehicles	£113,000
Light Vehicles	£43,000
Catering arrangements	£40,000
Cleaning of Service Premises	£13,000
Security at Headquarters	£50,000
Printers	£7,000
Total	£750,000
Cost Avoidance Potential	Current Spend
Additional Hours Cap	£593,000
Disturbance Allowance Review	£202,000

- 11.2 The total savings do not equate to the deficit of £1.198 million for 2027/28 and 2028/29. It is proposed that a phased approach will be taken for the next two years. The savings of £750k will be met in 2027/28 and during 2027/28 the Chief Fire Officer and the ELT will focus on reducing sickness, implementing a cap on annualised hours and reviewing the disturbance allowance which, combined, will realise the remaining £448,000.
- 11.3 A further report will be presented to the Fire Authority on 23rd July 2027, setting out the financial position and if the additional savings are forecasted to not meet the remaining deficit for 2028/29. At this point additional options will be explored for 2028/29. Additionally, this review, will assess the actual level of inflation and national pay awards prevailing over the next 12-18 months.

12 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- 12.1 The report details proposals to address the budget deficit forecast in the current MTFS of **£1.198m**. This figure reflects the Government confirming an annual £5 Band D Council Tax level and the Authority approving these increases. Without this additional income the current forecast deficit would increase by **£1.750m** to **£2.948m**, which would require even greater cuts to be identified.
- 12.2 The saving proposals reflect the Interim Chief Fire Officer's professional advice based on an assessment of risk, a comprehensive review of the budget and recognition that nearly 80% of the budget is spent on staffing costs. The remaining 20% of the budget includes significant fixed costs for e.g. business rates, vehicle fuel costs, insurance, utility costs etc.

- 12.3 The report advises the Authority that since the current MTFs was approved the outlook for inflation has worsened, owing to the USA/Iran war. The report outlines the potential impact and recommends reviewing this position later in the year. This may require the identification of a further savings plan, which may need to be support in 2027/28 by additional use of the Budget Support Fund to manage the phasing of further budget cuts.
- 12.4 Subject to approval by Cleveland Fire Authority, an Implementation Team will be established to oversee the delivery of the approved proposals. The team will operate under the sponsorship of the Interim Chief Fire Officer and will include core membership closely liaising with representatives from the following departments - Operational, Human Resources, Finance, Risk and Performance, Fleet, Estates, and Communications. Close engagement will also take place with the Representative Bodies. The purpose of the team will be to ensure that implementation is coordinated, appropriately governed, and delivered in a manner which maintains operational resilience and supports staff throughout the transition process.
- 12.5 The Implementation Team will be responsible for developing detailed project plans, timelines, risk registers, equality impact assessments, communication strategies and benefits realisation arrangements for each approved proposal. Progress will be monitored through regular reporting to the Executive Leadership Team, with updates provided to Members through existing governance arrangements.
- 12.6 Recognising the significance of several of the proposed changes, particularly those affecting operational staffing arrangements and service delivery models, the Authority will undertake a formal 12-week consultation process prior to implementation. This consultation will be conducted in accordance with the Authority's commitment to meaningful engagement and will include both internal workforce consultation and public consultation.
- 12.7 The internal consultation will provide staff, representative bodies and affected employees with the opportunity to examine the proposals in detail and provide feedback. This will include station visits, briefing sessions, departmental engagement events, written consultation documents, dedicated communication channels and meetings with recognised trade unions and staff representative groups. Feedback received during the consultation process will be formally recorded and considered before final implementation decisions are made.
- 12.8 The public consultation will seek the views of residents, partners, businesses, elected members and other stakeholders who may be affected by the proposed changes. Consultation activity will include publication of consultation materials on the Authority's website, community engagement events, stakeholder briefings and targeted engagement with local authorities, community safety partners and representative groups. Particular attention will be given to understanding the potential impact on communities and ensuring that equality and accessibility considerations are fully addressed.

- 12.9 At the conclusion of the 12-week consultation period, the findings will be analysed and presented to the Executive Leadership Team and Cleveland Fire Authority, together with any recommended amendments to the implementation approach. Subject to confirmation by the Authority, the Implementation Team will then progress delivery of the approved proposals, supported by regular monitoring and reporting arrangements.
- 12.10 The Authority will receive regular progress reports detailing the outcomes of consultation, implementation progress, realised savings, operational performance impacts and any emerging financial or service risks.
- 12.11 12 months from the commencement of the changes Post Implementation Reviews will be completed following the trial of the staffing officer and for day crewing E3 which represents the largest single saving and most significant operational change. This will assess incident outcomes, response performance, operational resilience and the impact on neighbouring stations.
- 12.12 Success measures for the 12-month East Cleveland trial will include appliance availability, average response times, building fire attendance standards, overtime costs, disturbance allowance costs and community risk outcomes.
- 12.13 Approval of the recommendations detailed in this report is designed to put the Authority in the best possible position to manage continuing financial uncertainty and avoid deferring an unmanageable budget deficit.

SIMON WEASTELL
Interim Chief Fire Officer

CHRIS LITTLE
Treasurer