



Service Delivery Review Consultation Document

PUBLIC CONSULTATION IS OPEN FROM:

**Thursday 3rd September 2026 until
Thursday 26th November 2026**

Help shape the future of your fire and rescue service.

FOREWORD

Cleveland Fire Brigade has a proud history of protecting people, places and futures across Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees. Every day, our firefighters, control staff and corporate teams work with dedication and professionalism to respond to emergencies, prevent harm and help keep our communities safe.

This consultation document sets out proposed changes to how some of our services are organised and delivered. The primary reason for considering change is the significant financial pressures facing the Service, including a recurring budget shortfall of £1.198 million that must be addressed to protect Cleveland Fire Brigade's long-term sustainability.

These proposals have therefore been developed to identify savings and efficiencies, to ensure the Service remains effective, resilient and financially sustainable, while continuing to provide effective emergency response, prevention and protection services for our communities.

No final decisions have been made. The purpose of this consultation is to listen carefully to the views of employees, representative bodies, local communities, partners and other interested parties before recommendations are developed and considered by Cleveland Fire Authority.

We recognise that any proposed change to fire and rescue services can raise understandable questions and concerns. That is why it is important that this consultation is open, transparent and evidence based. We want to understand what matters most to the people who live, work and serve in Cleveland, including any impacts we may not yet have fully identified.

Your feedback will help shape the next stage of this work. I encourage you to read the information in this document, consider the proposals carefully and share your views through the consultation process. By taking part, you will help inform decisions about how Cleveland Fire Brigade continues to protect local communities now and in the future.

David Coupe - Chair of Cleveland Fire Authority

Simon Weastell - Interim Chief Fire Officer, Cleveland Fire Brigade

ABOUT CLEVELAND FIRE BRIGADE

Every day, Cleveland Fire Brigade works to help keep people safe. We respond to emergencies across Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees.



Our firefighters deal with a wide range of incidents, including fires, road traffic collisions, flooding, rescues and incidents involving hazardous materials.

However, responding to emergencies is only part of what we do. We also work closely with residents, businesses and partner organisations to prevent emergencies from happening in the first place. This includes carrying out Safer Homes Visits, supporting vulnerable people, working with schools and enforcing fire safety legislation.

Our Purpose is Protecting People, Places and Futures.

Today, Cleveland Fire Brigade...



**Figures quoted as of September 2026.*

WHY WE NEED TO CHANGE

The role of a modern fire and rescue service continues to evolve. Whilst fire remains a significant risk, the types of incidents we attend, the communities we serve and the challenges we face are changing. At the same time, public services across the country are experiencing increasing financial pressures.

Like all Fire and Rescue Services, Cleveland Fire Brigade must balance available resources against the needs of the communities it serves. This means regularly reviewing how resources are organised and deployed to ensure they remain aligned to both local risk and operational demand.

In January 2026, the Service established Project Aspect in response to the financial challenges arising from the Government's Fair Funding formula for Fire and Rescue Services. The approved medium term financial strategy confirmed a recurring budget shortfall of £1.198 million from financial year 2026/27.

Cleveland Fire Authority agreed in February 2026 to use reserves to cover the deficit in 2026/27, and tasked the Chief Fire Officer to identify solutions to address the funding gap by July 2026.

Project Aspect Objectives:

- Identify sustainable financial savings without compromising frontline service delivery or public safety.
- Ensure resources are deployed efficiently, delivering maximum value for money.
- Reduce the need for workforce reductions by identifying alternative efficiencies and smarter ways of working.
- Provide the Executive Leadership Team and the Fire Authority with evidence-based options to support informed strategic decision-making.

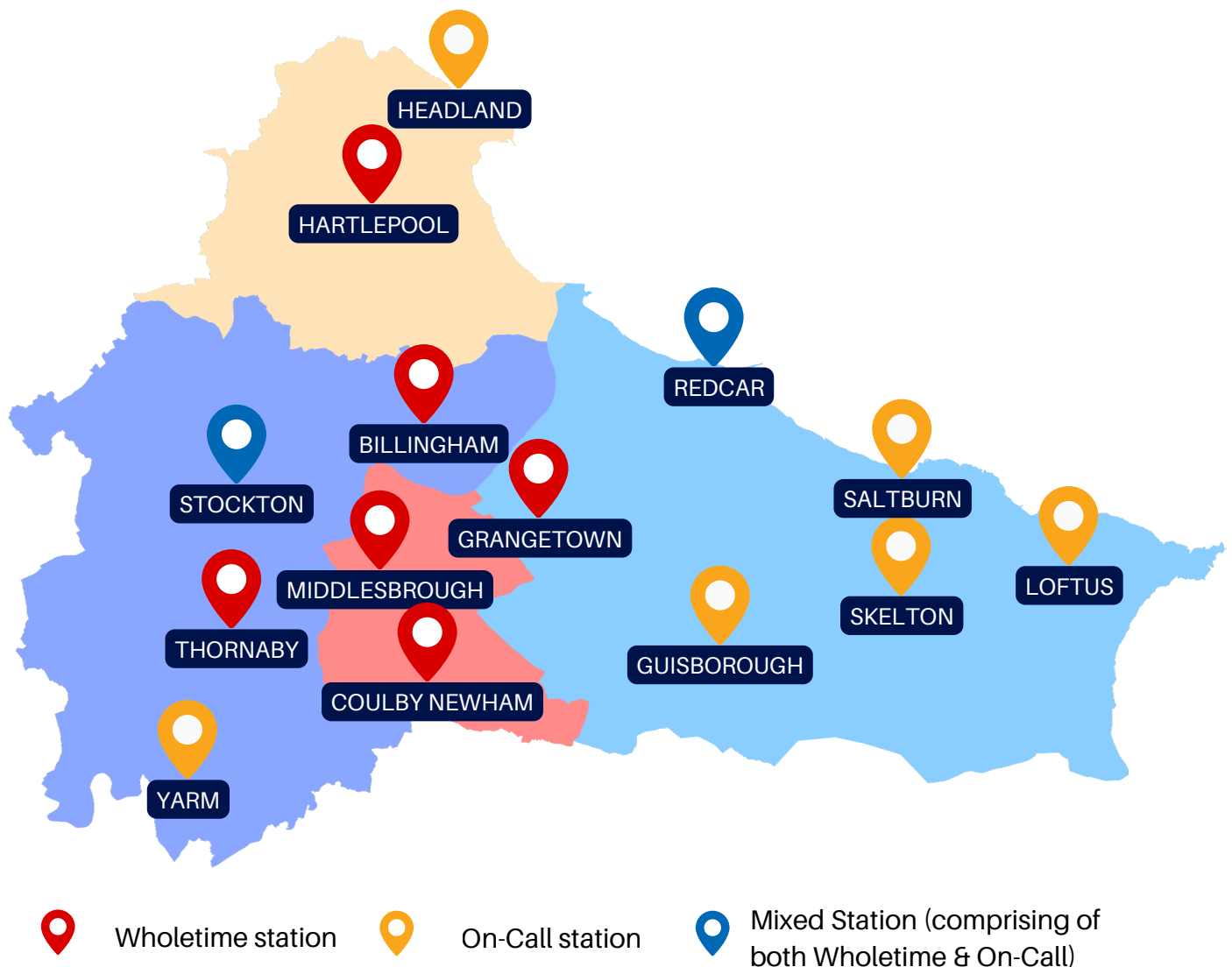
The project has considered how people, resources and funding can be used in a way that continues to support community safety whilst ensuring the Service remains financially sustainable.

OUR RISK

The risk faced by communities is not fixed. Changes in population, housing, transport networks, demographics and the wider environment can all influence where emergencies occur and how often they happen.

As part of Project Aspect, the Service has reviewed a range of information including incident data, community risk information, demographic trends and future forecasts.

This analysis helps us understand whether resources remain located where they are most likely to be needed.



OUR RISK CONTINUED...

Cleveland is home to almost 580,000 people and includes urban areas, coastal communities, rural locations and one of the UK's most significant industrial regions. Cleveland Fire Brigade protects more than 267,000 homes, over 16,000 businesses and industrial premises, and a range of nationally important infrastructure.

The risks facing our communities continue to change. Cleveland has higher than average levels of deprivation, long-term ill health and vulnerability, all of which can increase the likelihood and impact of emergencies. Our analysis shows that areas experiencing the highest levels of deprivation account for 79% of all fire incidents attended by the Service.

Cleveland also has a unique industrial risk profile. The area contains major industrial facilities, chemical processing sites, energy infrastructure, Teesside Freeport and 27 Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites. As a result, large industrial incidents and hazardous material emergencies remain among the most significant risks facing the area.

The types of incidents we attend are changing too. In recent years we have seen increases in road traffic collisions, deliberate fires, incidents involving lithium-ion batteries and incidents involving people in crisis. It is anticipated that climate change will contribute to a greater frequency and severity of flooding, extreme weather events, and wildfires in the years ahead.

Understanding how risk and demand are changing helps us ensure that our people, fire appliances and resources are located where they can have the greatest impact in keeping our communities safe. The proposals in this consultation are evidence based and have been developed using incident data, risk modelling and operational performance information. This evidence base has then been overlaid with the knowledge and expertise of both operational and non-operational staff from across the Service.

Whilst every emergency is different, understanding these trends helps ensure resources are positioned in the right places to protect communities both now and in the future.

OUR DEMAND

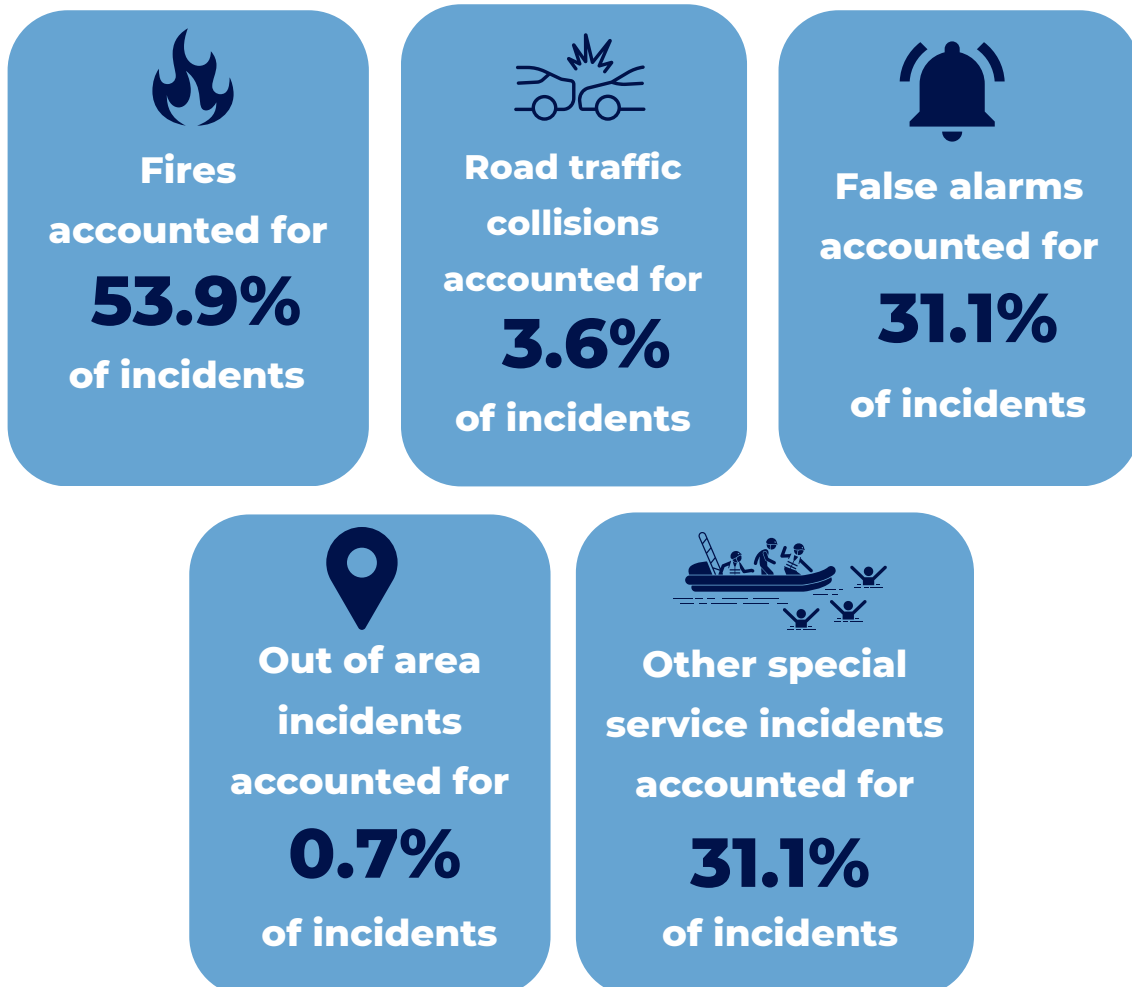
The number and type of incidents attended by Cleveland Fire Brigade has changed over time. Some incident types have reduced over recent years due to improvements in prevention, safety standards and public awareness. Other risks have increased or evolved.

Project Aspect has reviewed operational activity across the Service to better understand current and future demand. During this process, independent analysis and interpretation of the data was also carried out.

While some traditional incident types have reduced, demand relating to road traffic collisions, deliberate fires and incidents involving vulnerable people has increased.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, Cleveland Fire Brigade attended 11,042 incidents.

During this period:



This information has helped the Service assess where resources are most heavily used and where changes in demand may influence future service delivery.

FINANCIAL PRESSURES

Cleveland Fire Brigade must ensure it can continue to deliver effective services within the funding available. Like many organisations, we face increasing costs associated with inflation, pay awards, energy costs, equipment, buildings and contracts. Over the coming years, the Service is required to deliver savings through its Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The Service is currently facing a recurring budget shortfall of £1.198 million, from 2027/28. There is a risk this figure could increase as a result of higher than forecast inflation owing to international events. This £1.198 million represents a significant pressure for the Service, particularly as it is reliant on Government funding and contributions from Council Tax. All fire and rescue services (FRSs) receive contributions from Council Tax and the amount is based on the average of a band D property. However, due to Cleveland having a higher than average Council Tax banding of band B, the contribution is lower than other FRSs across the country.

A key aim of Project Aspect has been to identify solutions that address future financial pressures whilst minimising the impact on employees and avoiding more significant measures such as fire station closures or the removal of emergency response appliances wherever possible. The project has therefore examined whether resources can be organised differently while continuing to meet community need.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DO NOTHING

Doing nothing would mean retaining current arrangements. Whilst this may appear to be a good option, it would not remove the financial pressures facing the Service.

If no changes are made, the Service would still need to address the funding gap identified through its Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This would reduce the resources available to invest in people, equipment, vehicles, buildings and future service improvements, making day to day routine activity difficult. It may also require alternative savings options to be considered in the future or increase the need for borrowing funds.

Project Aspect has therefore explored a range of options to understand the most effective ways of delivering services while maintaining community safety.

The purpose of this consultation is to help us understand whether the proposals are the right way to achieve the aims of the project.

HOW WE DEVELOPED THE PROPOSALS

The proposals set out within this document were developed through a detailed review, which took place over a number of months.

The project considered:

- Independent review of operational activity and response information.
- Financial information and future forecasts.
- Workforce considerations.
- Community risk information.
- Equality impacts.
- Lessons learned from consultations undertaken elsewhere.

A number of alternative approaches were explored before the current proposals were developed, using a process with multiple stages:



Idea Collection

Ideas were gathered from various sources, including consultation with staff and representative bodies in different forums and put together to create a comprehensive list.



Proposal Consolidation

All input was consolidated into groups of key proposals focusing on budget savings and operational improvements.



Leadership Consideration

All proposals were considered by the project team and the Executive Leadership Team.



Initial Assessments

The project carried out initial feasibility assessments of each proposal to understand if they were a realistic opportunity to achieve the aims of the project.



Detailed Assessments

This resulted in several proposals being considered in more detail.



Further Consideration

Recommended proposals were presented to the Executive Leadership Team and then to Cleveland Fire Authority.

At the outset of this work, it was agreed that the following options would not be considered:

- **Fire station closures**
- **24-hour shift patterns**
- **Day Crewing Plus**

Throughout Project Aspect, a wide range of potential options were considered. These included changes to staffing arrangements, deployment models, estate utilisation, appliance provision and other operational and non-operational efficiencies.

The two proposals included within this consultation were identified as the options that best balanced community risk, operational performance, workforce considerations and financial sustainability, whilst avoiding more significant reductions to emergency response resources.

Rather than the alternative solution which would have been to permanently remove a wholetime fire appliance, which equates to £1.2 million. Furthermore, using the evidence based data, this would have been a fire appliance from Thornaby.

BALANCING OUR PRIORITIES



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Maintaining an effective and resilient emergency response service for our communities.



OUR WORKFORCE

Considering the impact of any changes on our people and the way we work.



OUR RESOURCES

Using our resources and estate in the most effective and efficient way possible.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Delivering the savings required and ensuring long-term sustainability.

These proposals aim to achieve the right balance between these priorities to protect our people, places and futures.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES

The following pages set out the two proposals being considered as part of this consultation. For each proposal we explain the current arrangements, the proposed changes, why the proposal is being considered, the potential benefits and challenges, and the aspects of service delivery that would remain unchanged.

PROPOSAL ONE: Changes to Staffing Model at Thornaby Fire Station

Current Position

Thornaby Fire Station responds to an average of 3.12 daily incidents, 44% of these incidents are within the Thornaby station area.

Thornaby Fire Station currently has two wholetime fire appliances. Wholetime firefighters work shifts, allowing the station to provide emergency response cover 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The availability of individual fire appliances can occasionally vary due to factors such as training, leave, sickness absence or operational requirements.

Thornaby Fire Station is the Service's primary base for water rescue operations. Alongside two fire appliance, it hosts a Specialist Water Rescue Unit and rescue boat. The station's specialist team is also included on the National Resilience Asset Register, providing a capability that can be deployed in support of regional and national incidents.

What Is Being Proposed?

We are proposing to change the staffing arrangement for one of the two fire appliances based at Thornaby Fire Station.

Under this proposal, one fire appliance would continue to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The second fire appliance would operate for 12 hours per day, 7 days a week, during daytime hours. Start and finish time will be agreed in negotiations with staff and the representative bodies.

Outside of these hours, emergency response would continue to be provided by the remaining fire appliance at Thornaby Fire Station and by other available fire appliances from across Cleveland Fire Brigade.

It is proposed that the water rescue capability is twinned between Thornaby and Stockton Fire Stations, with the Water Rescue Vehicle relocated to Stockton Fire Station. Under this model, any incident requiring a water rescue response would trigger the simultaneous mobilisation of resources from both stations. Stockton firefighters, comprising qualified Swift Water Rescue Technicians, would provide the land-based rescue capability, while qualified Thornaby firefighters would deploy and operate the rescue boat. This arrangement maintains the current level of water rescue provision and ensures there is no delay in the deployment of specialist water rescue resources.

Why Is This Being Proposed?

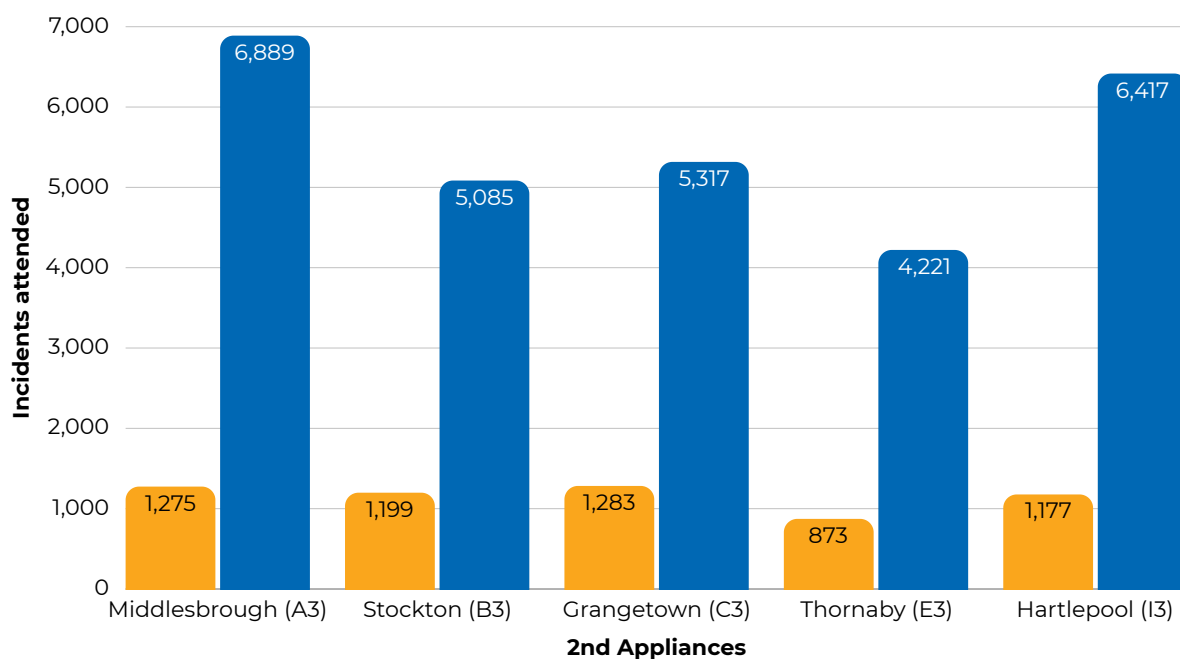
This proposal will contribute towards the long-term financial sustainability of the Service, helping ensure resources remain available to meet future risks and demands.

The proposal has been informed by analysis of community risk, operational demand, response performance, appliance availability, independent modelling of data and financial information.

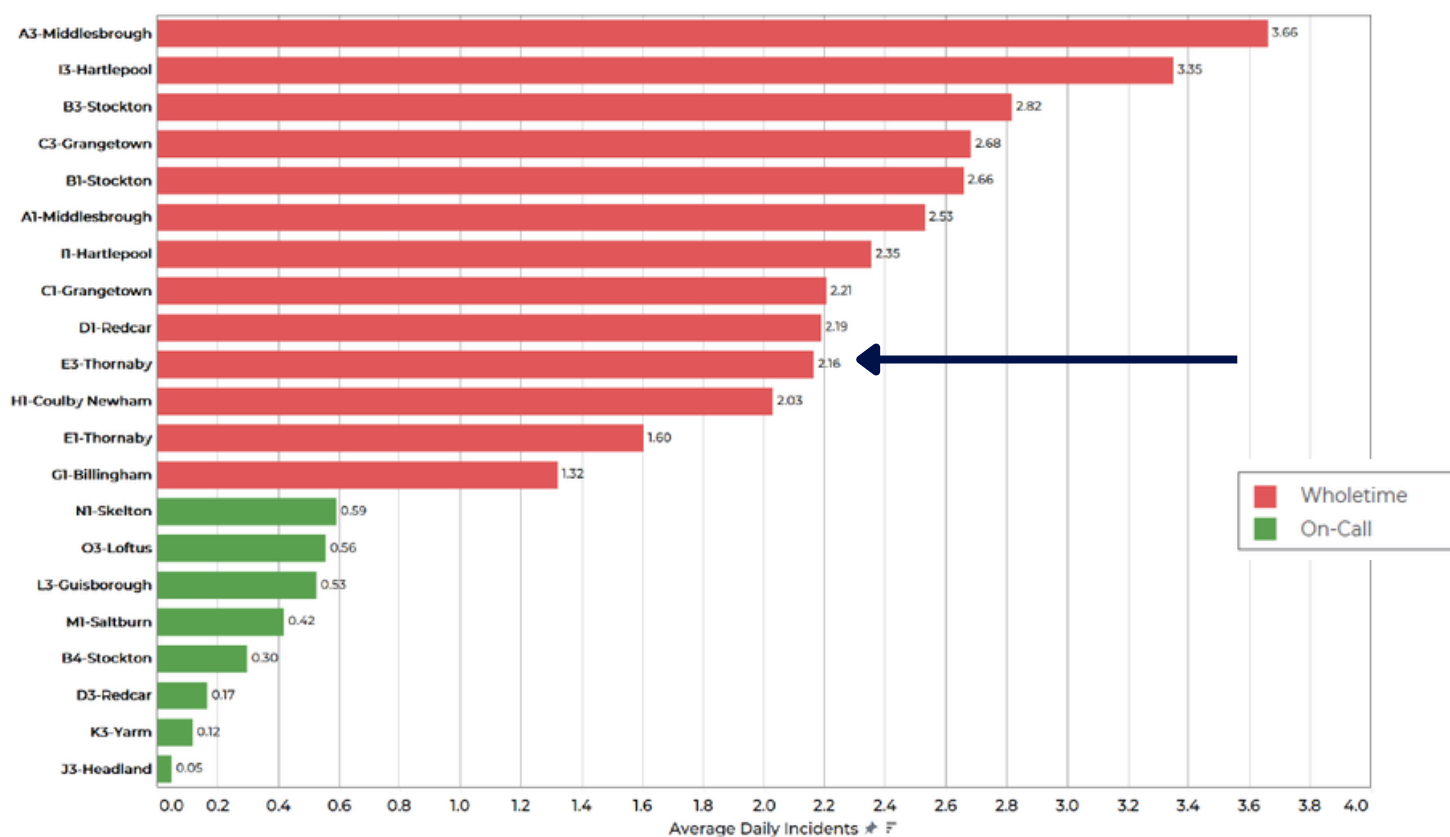
Our analysis shows that emergency incidents occur more frequently during daytime periods than overnight. The proposal is intended to better align resources with periods of greatest demand whilst maintaining a 24-hour emergency response capability from Thornaby Fire Station.

PROPOSAL ONE: Changes to Staffing Model at Thornaby Fire Station

Incident data shows that the 2nd appliances located at Grangetown, Hartlepool Middlesbrough and Stockton Fire Stations operate with similar levels of demand. Whilst Thornaby attended significantly fewer incidents. This can be seen in the graph below for 2025/26 and the previous 5 years:



The average number of daily incidents attended by the Service is shown below, with Thornaby's 2nd appliance having the lowest daily rate compared with other 2nd appliances.



PROPOSAL ONE: Changes to Staffing Model at Thornaby Fire Station

Potential Benefits:

- Contributes towards the financial savings required by the Service with limited impact on emergency response performance.
- Avoids more significant changes that could have a greater impact on service delivery or staffing levels.
- Alignment of resources within periods of greatest operational demand.

Potential Concerns:

- How emergency response would be provided during overnight periods.
- The impact on neighbouring station areas.
- The effect on employees, including changes to station locations and shift patterns.
- How the proposal would be implemented and managed.

These are areas where we would particularly value feedback through the consultation process.

What Would Not Change?

If this proposal were implemented, Thornaby Fire Station would remain open and continue to provide emergency response cover to local communities.

The station would continue to provide a 24-hour emergency response capability. This proposal maintains the specialist capability (water rescue) within the Service.

Training, supervisory and National Resilience competencies will continue to be maintained and developed to ensure high operational standards across all operational personnel.

Emergency calls would continue to be managed by Fire Control, with the nearest available fire appliance mobilised to incidents, as they currently are.

No redundancies are proposed as part of this proposal.

PROPOSAL TWO: Changes to Fire Cover in East Cleveland

Current Position

The communities of Guisborough, Loftus, Saltburn and Skelton are currently served by On-Call Fire Stations. Together, these areas are referred to as East Cleveland when reviewing emergency response performance and operational activity.



On-Call Firefighters respond to the same range of emergencies as wholetime crews, including house fires, road traffic collisions, flooding and rescue incidents. Unlike wholetime firefighters, on-call firefighters are not permanently based at the fire station. Instead, they respond to incidents from their home or workplace when alerted to an emergency.

To support emergency response in the area, wholetime fire appliances are regularly moved into East Cleveland from elsewhere in Cleveland. The Service responds to an average of 1.9 daily incidents in the East Cleveland area, average appliance availability across the four On-Call Fire stations was 70.28%. On-Call availability is less than the average availability of wholetime fire appliances, which is 94.03%.

Due to the nature of the On-Call role, there is also less opportunity to carry out wider community safety activities such as Safer Homes Visits, fire safety engagement and business fire safety activity. As a result, the level of this work delivered in East Cleveland is currently lower than in some other areas of Cleveland.

PROPOSAL TWO: Changes to Fire Cover in East Cleveland

What Is Being Proposed?

We are proposing to introduce a more consistent wholetime presence within East Cleveland.

Under this proposal, a wholetime fire appliance would be relocated within East Cleveland during daytime hours, when our on-call availability is usually at its lowest. This will support local emergency response, prevention and protection activities. The appliance would be provided from the Service's existing resources on a rotational basis and planned in advance.

All existing On-Call fire stations, appliances and firefighters would remain in place and continue to provide emergency response cover as they do today.

Why Is This Being Proposed?

The proposal will contribute towards the long-term financial sustainability of the Service, helping ensure resources remain available to meet future risks and demands.

Whilst dedicated On-Call firefighters continue to provide a vital service to local communities, appliance availability can vary and wholetime resources are regularly required to support emergency response in the area. As this is arranged at short notice and unplanned, it incurs significant costs in the form of overtime, disturbance payments and cancelled training events, which then have to be re-scheduled.

The proposal is intended to provide a more consistent wholetime presence in East Cleveland, improving emergency response performance and increasing the amount of prevention and protection activity delivered within local communities.

The proposal has been informed by an evidence base using analysis of community risk, operational demand, response performance, appliance availability, independent modelling and financial information.

PROPOSAL TWO: Changes to Fire Cover in East Cleveland

Potential Benefits:

- Improve emergency response performance within East Cleveland.
- Provide a more consistent operational presence in local communities.
- Increase the delivery of Safer Homes Visits, business fire safety activity and community safety initiatives.
- Support activity to reduce deliberate fires and other local risks.
- A reduction in short-notice staffing changes and appliance moves.
- Fewer training cancellations.
- Reduced additional costs associated with resource movements.

Potential Concerns:

- How emergency response arrangements would operate in practice.
- The impact on Wholetime and On-Call employees.
- The effect on areas from which the supporting wholetime appliance would be provided.
- How the proposal would be implemented and managed.
- Perceptions regarding changes to local service provision.

These are areas where we would particularly value feedback through the consultation process.

What Would Not Change?

If this proposal were implemented, the On-Call Fire Stations at Guisborough, Loftus, Saltburn and Skelton would remain open and continue to respond to emergencies in their local communities. Existing On-Call firefighters and appliances would remain in place and continue to play a vital role in protecting East Cleveland.

The Service would continue to provide a 24-hour emergency response capability in East Cleveland as they currently do. Emergency calls would continue to be managed by Fire Control, with the nearest available fire appliance mobilised to incidents.

The proposal is intended to strengthen fire cover in East Cleveland by providing additional support alongside existing On-Call arrangements, rather than replacing them. The recruitment of On-Call firefighters will continue in the future.

EQUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Cleveland Fire Brigade is committed to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate in this consultation, the Service has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment which will continue to be reviewed and updated as consultation responses are received. This will help us understand whether the proposals may affect different groups in different ways and whether any additional actions or safeguards should be considered.

We are particularly keen to hear from people who may be affected differently by the proposals and recognise that some people may experience barriers participating in the consultation. Therefore, we will make reasonable adjustments and provide alternative methods of engagement and accessible formats where possible. If you require support to take part in the consultation, please contact us using the details provided at the end of this document.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The purpose of this consultation is to understand how employees, representative bodies, local communities and other interested parties feel about the proposals.

We are particularly interested in hearing:

- What you support.
- What concerns you.
- Whether there are impacts we may not have identified.
- Whether there are alternative options we should consider.

All feedback received during the consultation will be carefully considered and used to inform the final recommendations, which will be presented to Cleveland Fire Authority for consideration before any decisions are made.

The consultation will include:

- Public consultation events.
- Online engagement sessions.
- Staff engagement sessions.
- Stakeholder meetings.
- Online consultation survey.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Reviewing Your Feedback

Once the consultation closes, we will take time to carefully review all the feedback we receive. Every response will be considered alongside the operational, financial and equality information that has informed the development of the proposals.

As well as support and opposition for each proposal, we want to understand people's experiences, concerns, suggestions and any alternative ideas they believe should be considered.

Throughout this process we will look for common themes, emerging issues and areas where further consideration may be needed before decisions are made. Where consultation feedback identifies significant concerns or unintended consequences, these will be considered as part of the final review.

Developing Recommendations

When all consultation responses have been reviewed, a consultation findings report will be produced. This report will summarise the findings during the consultation and identify the key themes raised by participants. It will also explain how consultation feedback, evidence and equality considerations have been considered.

The report will be used to support the development of final recommendations for consideration through the Services established governance arrangements.

Any recommendations arising from the consultation will be fully considered and reviewed through the Services governance structure before being presented to Cleveland Fire Authority for decision.

Cleveland Fire Authority will consider the consultation findings alongside operational evidence, financial information, equality impacts and any alternative proposals that have emerged through the consultation process.

Sharing the Outcome

Once a decision has been made, we will publish the outcome of the consultation.

We will also publish a "You Said, We Did" summary to demonstrate how the views of employees, stakeholders and communities helped inform the outcome.

If you have questions about this consultation or require information in an alternative format, please contact:

**Cleveland Fire Brigade
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Hartlepool
TS25 5TH**

Telephone: 01429 872311

Email: communications@clevelandfire.gov.uk

FIND OUT MORE & HAVE YOUR SAY

Scan the QR code to complete the consultation survey. We recommend you read the full Consultation Information Documentation first.



www.clevelandfire.gov.uk/service-delivery-review/



communications@clevelandfire.gov.uk



01429 872311



**SCAN TO
HAVE YOUR SAY**

**CLEVELAND
FIRE BRIGADE**



Protecting People, Places and Futures