



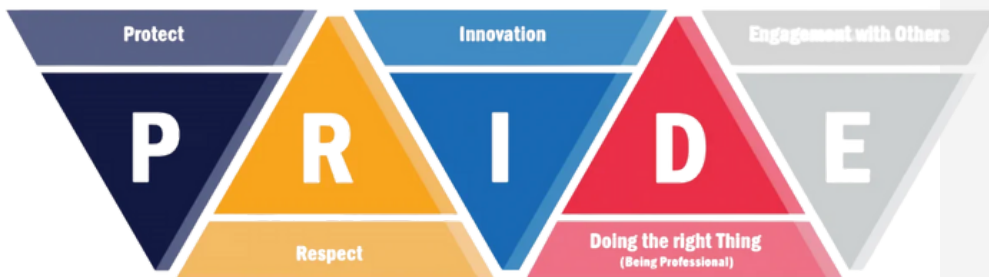
Cleveland Fire Brigade

# SERVICE PLAN

*2025/26*

# INTRODUCTION

I, Peter Rickard, took over as Chief Fire Officer in September 2024. Since then, we have seen significant other changes to our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) at Cleveland Fire Brigade. Despite these changes, our commitment to delivering our Vision and Mission in **“making Teesside safer and stronger”** remains unwavering. Our strong set of values continue to drive the way in how we behave and respond to others in the workplace.



**PETER RICKARD**  
Chief Fire Officer

While we recognise that Cleveland Fire Brigade performs well in many areas, we are also aware of areas where improvements are needed and we are committed to addressing these. We understand the wider challenges around culture and leadership across fire and rescue services in the United Kingdom.

In addition to delivering against our current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) we are also developing our next plan. This will be co-created with our communities and partners and will take effect from April 2026, once approved by Cleveland Fire Authority.

Community and business safety remains our number one priority and we will continue to respond when required to emergency calls, provide fire safety advice and deliver prevention services to those people who are most at risk.

We continue to undertake a significantly higher rate of Safer Homes Visits and Industrial and Commercial Premises Fire Regulation Audits than most other Fire and Rescue Services. Additionally, when we are required to respond to incidents, our attendance times to fire incidents are one of the fastest in the country.

This means that people in Teesside are safer in their homes, at work, within their neighbourhoods; and on their roads than in any other area in the country.

In 2025, we will continue to address the national recommendations outlined in the HMICFRS State of Fire and Rescue Report, the Annual Assessments of FRSs in England Report, and the HMICFRS Spotlight Report '**Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services**'. This is in addition to the HMICFRS on Standards of Behaviour: The Handling of Misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services.

Looking beyond 2025/26, our financial position remains uncertain and challenging due to inflationary pressures, fair pay awards, and unknown outcomes from the Business Rate Retention and Fair Funding Reviews, alongside the impact of the Firefighter Pension Scheme. This uncertainty makes financial planning particularly difficult for Fire and Rescue Authorities, including Cleveland, which are more reliant on Government funding.

Despite these challenges, we will continue to review our plans to ensure we respond to financial pressures in a proactive and strategic way. Our priority remains providing the communities of Teesside with a range of excellent, value for money community safety services they deserve.

Building on our past successes, we are committed to ensuring Cleveland Fire Brigade continues to be valued and recognised as a high-performing brigade, delivered by a professional, proud, and passionate workforce.



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## OUR VISION

**Our vision is to be a leading Fire and Rescue Service where our:**

- Communities feel safe and protected
- People are professional, passionate and proud
- Organisation is welcoming, trusted and respected
- Business is built on learning and innovative digital approach
- Future is 'greener' and brighter



## OUR PLANS

**The Authority publishes the following plans:**

- **Corporate Plan 2022-26** which sets out the vision of Cleveland Fire Authority for 2030 and the strategic direction for the next four years.
- **Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26** which sets out the strategic direction, financial position, risk assessments and intended deployment of resources over the medium term. This plan is underpinned by a complementary Resource Plan 2022-26 and People Plan 2022-26.
- **Service Plan** which sets out the priorities each year to deliver in line with the CRMP.
- **Performance and Efficiency Report** which reports on the previous years performance and efficiency against the strategic outcomes in the CRMP.
- **Statement of Assurance** which reflects on the previous years performance covering governance, finance and operational matters.

These documents can be found on our website at [www.clevelandfire.gov.uk](http://www.clevelandfire.gov.uk)



## OUR FINANCES 2025/26

Like all fire services, our funding comes from three primary sources: Government Grants, Council Tax, and a share of Business Rates.

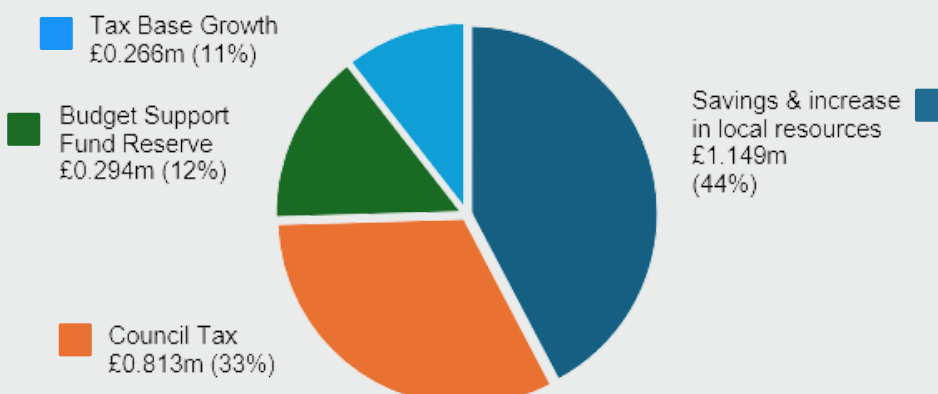
Since 2015/16, there has been a national shift in funding from Government Grants to Council Tax. As a result, the amount of our budget funded from Council Tax has increased from 36% in 2015/16 to 46% in 2025/26.

Alongside this change, we have received one of the highest cuts in Government Grants out of all Fire Services. As a result of these changes our total resources over the period 2015/16 increased by 31% - compared to 45% for the Fire Service with the highest increase. If our increase had been 45%, we would have had enough funding for an additional 66 wholetime firefighters.

Our budget will need to increase to manage the continuing impact of inflation, national pay awards and the increase in employers National Insurance, which is only partly covered by additional grant funding. As a result, our costs are forecast to increase by £2.522m. To address this increase, we have looked carefully at our budgets and will make savings of £1.149m - without impacting on frontline services.

The budget will also benefit from tax base growth, reflecting housebuilding across the area, and the use of our Budget Support Fund Reserve - which can only be used once and is not a sustainable solution.

After reflecting these measures, we have had to increase Council Tax by a small amount. For 63.8% of our households the annual increase will be £3.89 or less - which is around an additional 7p per week. This will enable us to balance the budget, as highlighted below:





# OUR PRIORITIES 2025/26

This Service Plan brings all the key priorities, goals and objectives from our strategic plans together in one place ensuring that they are clear, focused and achievable. We have aligned the priorities to 6 key areas of focus:

PEOPLE



PREVENTION



PROTECTION



RESPONSE



STRATEGIC PLANNING



RESOURCES





## PEOPLE

We recognise the difference that every member of staff makes in keeping our local communities safe, and therefore it is only right that we continue to invest in our people.

Our people priorities over the next year, aim to ensure that we continue to attract and retain a workforce who are competent, professional and flexible, and develop leaders who are strong, resilient and embrace and model our values and ethical behaviours.

It is also important that we remain focused on creating a fair and inclusive workplace where our staff feel safe and valued, and that their contribution to the overall organisational effectiveness is acknowledged.

### **Our strategic objectives for People are:**

- Introduce Cleveland Fire People Awards night to recognise and celebrate individual and team contributions to organisational achievements aligned to values and ethical behaviours.
- Undertake a Review of our Job Evaluation arrangements.
- Review training provision to staff relating to Culture and EDI.
- Undertake a review of the services approach to promotion processes.
- Review training and development arrangements with elected members.
- Review Continuing Professional Development, Competency Framework and PDR process.
- Complete 'All's Well' research project into sickness absence and use outcomes to inform a review of the sickness absence policy and procedure including training for managers.
- Review our Mental Health and Wellbeing offer, including refreshing the Policy and Procedure and training.





## PEOPLE CONTINUED

- Review Employee Induction Procedure.
- Consider 360 Appraisal Feedback Mechanisms and, if appropriate, introduce for all staff.
- Review current approach to apprenticeships to align with service needs. Produce an Apprenticeship Strategy 2026/30.
- Review the services approach to Recruitment, Selection, including updating the Policy and Procedure.
- Undertake a staff cultural survey.
- Complete the recommendations within HMICFRS 'Standards of Behaviour' Report.
- Ensure access to a dedicated Professional Standards function.
- Undertake a full review of our approach to discipline, dignity at work and grievance processes ensuring that they cover key national recommendations and shared learning.
- Implement the National Age Discrimination Remedy for Firefighter Pension Schemes.
- Continue to explore opportunities to invest in and improve strategic leadership.



# PREVENTION

Prevention is at the core of our work, as we strive to make our communities as safe as possible, meaning preventing fires and emergencies from happening in the first place is our priority, as it is the most effective way to protect Teesside.

We focus on supporting vulnerable adults, those most at risk of fire, and children and young people to enhance their safety, health, and well-being.

Our commitment extends to ensuring every child and young person has the opportunity to thrive while also helping adults lead longer, healthier lives through improved safety measures.

Recognising that safety needs evolve throughout life, we tailor our efforts to help people start safe, live safe, and age safe. We also promote road and water safety, with a particular focus on those most at risk. Through proactive engagement, education, and targeted interventions, we work to build safer, more resilient communities.

## **Our strategic objectives for Prevention are:**

- Review our Arson Reduction Strategy with Partners.
- Extend our Community Volunteer Scheme that will sit alongside our Commissioned Services Team.
- Embed the new Community Safety System into operational practice including delivery of staff training.
- Work with partners to identify vulnerable people within our community to support them to stay safe from fire.



# PROTECTION

Our Protection work is a vital part of our statutory duty under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Building Safety Act 2022. We are committed to working closely with the business community to reduce the risk of fire and ensure compliance with fire safety legislation, ultimately making Teesside a safer place.

Through our Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP), we prioritise audits and inspections, focusing on premises that present the highest risk to life. In addition, we provide essential support to building owners, responsible persons and tenants, reinforcing our commitment to maintaining high safety standards across the built environment.

## **Our strategic objectives for Protection are:**

- Review, embed and evaluate the RBIP to ensure our methodology continues to prioritise premises that are of the highest risk.
- Review the approach to the cross-functional management of risk and implement improvements.
- Actively implement learning from major events such as, Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase 2, and Manchester Arena Inquiry.
- Use good practice (NFCC Access to Services) to improve engagement with our business community.
- Review the current system for Fire Protection to understand potential future options.
- Complete a review of our approach to Fire Protection.



## RESPONSE

Our emergency response function ensures a safe and effective response to emergencies through highly trained and competent operational and fire control personnel.

We maintain readiness for unpredictable emergencies by maintaining fully equipped teams with the right resources to meet our unique risk profile. Supporting the Government's National Resilience Capabilities Programme, we will collaborate with multi-agency partners in the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum to ensure coordinated planning and response to emergencies at all levels.

Through effective risk information gathering and the provision of competent personnel trained to National Operational Guidance, we deploy trained firefighters with appropriate equipment to effectively resolve incidents while minimising risks to lives, businesses, and property.

The safety of our people and communities continues to be a main priority as we collaborate with other emergency services and partners to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery.

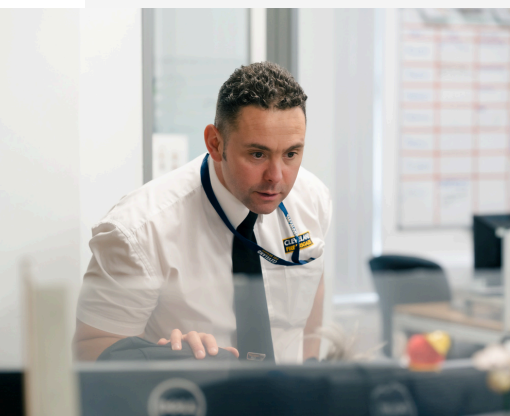
### **Our strategic objectives for Response are:**

- Implement recommendations from CFB Gap Analysis against the NFCC Evaluation on Contaminants whilst considering potential organisational costs.
- Implement the collaborative project with CDDFRS, H&WFRS and Shropshire FRS for the future provision of fire call handling and mobilising services.
- Review and implement the On-Call Improvement Programme to increase the Availability of On-Call Fire Appliances.
- Review the Firefighting Strategy to ensure optimum effectiveness in Emergency Response Provision.
- Use the outcomes from our Independent Resource Review to develop options for improving our emergency response cover to meet current future risks and demands.



## RESPONSE CONTINUED

- Evaluate the Whole-time Duty System for Station Based Grey Book personnel.
- Undertake a review of the existing provision to deliver Emergency Response Driver training, in line with Fire Standard 'Emergency Response Driving' with specific regard to compliance with legislation and NFCC Emergency Response Driver & Instructor Framework.
- Expand and streamline the use of Fire Service Rota where appropriate.





# STRATEGIC PLANNING

To ensure continuous improvement, drive innovation and use our resources effectively it is important that we ensure our strategic planning is correct. For this next year we will be modernising our approach to strategic planning with a goal of producing clear, understandable information which is relevant, suitable and interesting for the audience.

Improving corporate governance will ensure there are golden threads running through all of our plans, incorporating the principles of programme and project management to ensure everything we do is aligned to our strategic vision.

## **Our strategic objectives for Strategic Planning are:**

- Undertake a review of the current Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Consider national reports and research published to ensure that any learning relating to Cleveland Fire Brigade is captured.
- Complete a programme of consultation and risk modelling to determine CRMP priorities and ultimately produce a new public CRMP.
- Monitor and review Fire Standards, including completion of gap analysis for any new standards published.
- Ensure HMICFRS outcomes are communicated to all Members and employees and an action plan developed and completed to address Areas for Improvement.
- Undertake a review of the internal meetings and Boards.
- Review the organisational resources in line with strategic priorities.
- Review the services approach to programme and project management.



## RESOURCES

We aim to use our resources efficiently to provide the best possible fire and rescue service for our communities, ensuring the Service remains affordable both now and in the future. Continuous learning, innovation, and digital transformation will drive efficiencies and improve productivity across all of our activities.

We are committed to ensuring that we have a fleet, an estate and equipment that are sustainable, fit for the future and meet the needs of our workforce and our communities.

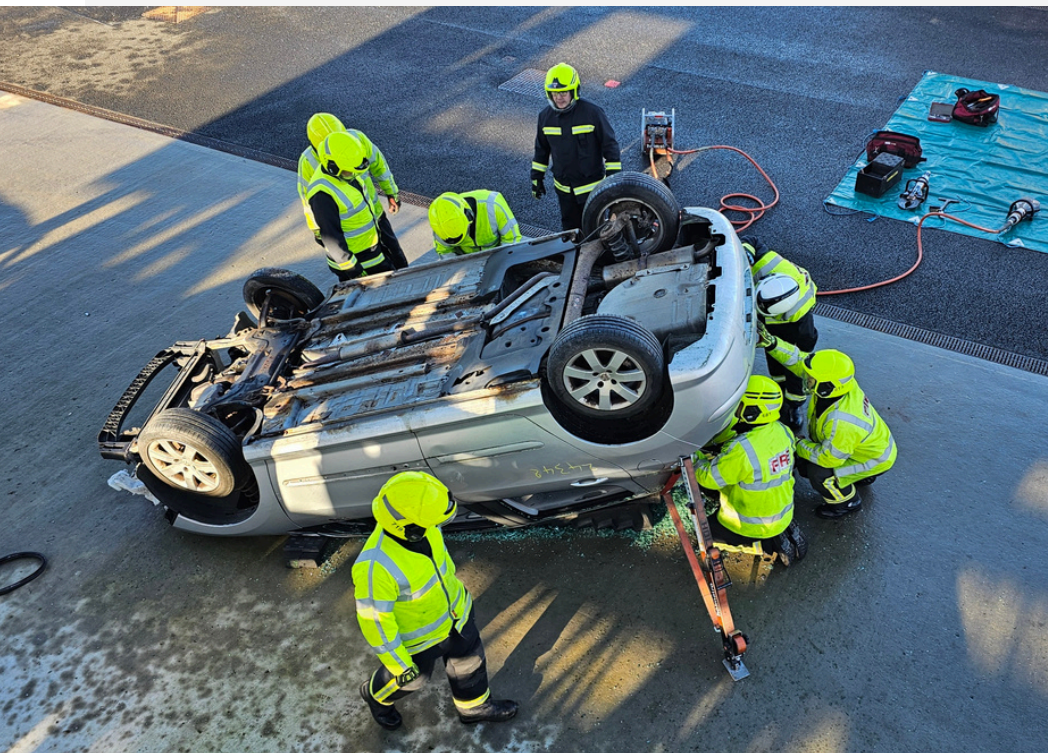
### **Our strategic objectives for Resources are:**

- Undertake a full audit, in line with the Organisational Audit Assurance Programme, to ensure that all risk management processes are legally compliant.
- Deliver the 2025/26 elements of the Asset Management Plan.
- Deliver the 2025/26 elements of the Digital Transformation Strategy.
- Deliver the 2025/26 elements of the Climate Change Strategy.
- Recommence engagement with the national Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme.
- Consider options for community fire stations at Coulby Newham and Yarm as part of the refurbishment programme.
- Roll out new SCBA sets, cylinders and telemetry.
- Procure new structural PPE Fire Kit for implementation in 2026/27.
- Integrate the national Multi-Agency Incident Transfer system within our Fire Control Room.
- Deliver a new replacement Aerial Ladder Platform into service.



## RESOURCES CONTINUED

- Deliver four new Fire Appliances into service.
- Undertake a review of the existing uniform provision for Operational and Corporate employees, including review of the Dress and Appearance Policy.
- Explore options for potential commercialisation of hydrant inspections.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration in line with the partnership framework.
- Review the MTFs to reflect planned 2026/27 national funding reforms







## HAVE YOUR SAY

### Would you like to be involved in shaping the future services delivered by your local Fire and Rescue Service?

This plan provides information about our future priorities. You may:

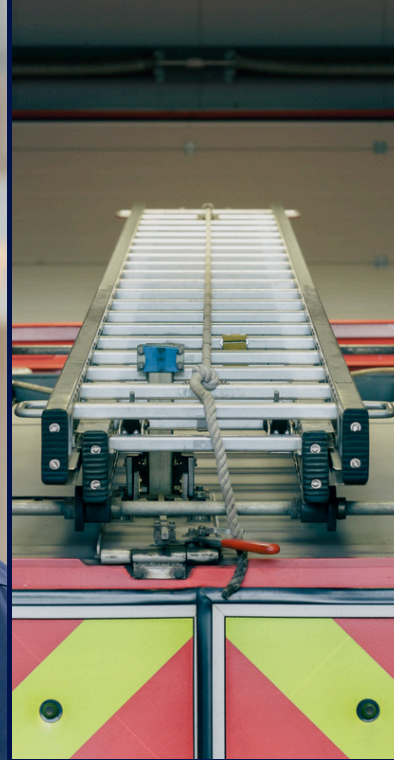
- want to make a contribution and/or be involved in helping us target and deliver our services.
- have comments or feedback regarding the content of this plan.
- be interested to know more about the range of services we provide.
- have ideas about how you could help us to deliver services that will make a positive difference.
- improve both safety and quality of life for our communities.

If you would like to be involved please contact the Communications Team:

 01429 874035

 [communications@clevelandfire.gov.uk](mailto:communications@clevelandfire.gov.uk)







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