

100 Day Report for Julia Mulligan into North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service, by Andrew Brodie, Interim Chief Fire Officer

This report sets out my understanding of today's North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service after 100 days in post. It's been gained through workplace visits, listening to colleagues, reading documents, meeting partners and day to day management activity. In summary:

- We are an effective fire and rescue service with people who are committed to delivering good internal and external services. There are no obvious areas of concern about safety, service delivery or culture that need immediate action. The public we exist to serve on your behalf can feel safe because we make sure they are safe. There is a great appetite for change and colleagues are willing to step outside traditional approaches to improve our service delivery. Relationships between management and representative bodies is healthy and improving, essential for delivery of future change and sustainability.
- We suffer from chronic long-term under-investment and some long-standing cultural challenges. Much of the estate is dilapidated, too many workplaces are uninspiring. Technological advancements in equipment, fleet and ICT have too often not been made. Mistrust exists between layers of the organisation and this stifles initiative. The means of introducing Tactical Response Vehicles has damaged trust, though it's being rebuilt through sensible, pragmatic decisions and engagement with firefighters and their representative bodies. Colleague's default outlook is to focus on the past and on failures, and encouragement is needed to focus on the present, future and successes; once this happens the ideas are limitless and helpful.

The report is structured around the main aspects of a fire and rescue service. It moves between the service as it is today and a vision of how it could be in 2025. Some of what's described in 2025 is already in place, but it's less systematic and deliberate than it could be and there is room to improve.

The 2025 vision is ambitious and targets excellence. The key challenges in meeting it include funding, capacity to deliver and the willingness of the public, colleagues and representative bodies to adapt. It will also be influenced by the priorities of the next Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

This report forms part of a longer timeline of reports on the status and direction of the service. In 2018 a Business Case set out the impact and benefits of a change of governance to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner model. This was followed by a Baseline Report by an independent consultant at the point of governance handover, to which our Corporate Management Board provided a response. The Staff Survey told us what it's like to work here and where we can improve. In 2019 we'll receive the first report from the newly established Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services. Combined, these reports, position statements and future vision provide the evidence base for the short, medium and long-term plans needed to transform into a modern and effective fire and rescue service.

Culture and Behaviours

2019

I haven't witnessed explicit problems with culture and behaviour. Colleagues are proud to work for the service and workplaces appear to be healthy. The schisms that can exist between different staff groups are less obvious and colleagues value each other's contributions. However, my view is blinkered by not spending concerted time in any single workplace outside headquarters and the false environment that can exist during senior officer visits. Concerns exist about inappropriate language and behaviour toward individuals and groups. These must be challenged, addressed and eradicated; there is no place in the service for people who treat others disrespectfully or unkindly.

Colleagues have been damaged by the impact of austerity on pay and pensions, this is a common topic of conversation. While understandable, it affects motivation. These issues will be resolved through national negotiations for firefighter pay and the legal system for pensions. However, a willingness to empathise and to recognise the valid concerns is welcomed. Firefighters are willing to broaden their remit if appropriate recompense, education and equipment is in place, albeit the priority correctly remains on our statutory fire and rescue service functions.

Transform 2020 and the introduction of Enable has affected colleagues. Uncertainty has inevitably created tension and this will take time to work through as further changes emerge.

Some mistrust exists in parts of the organisation. The introduction of Tactical Response Vehicles caused damage, colleagues sensing it was forced upon them with their concerns not addressed and without them properly understanding the rationale. In other areas trust is high, with anxiety about change being tempered by good, honest relationships between managers and teams.

Parts of our workforce aren't diverse enough, most starkly the low numbers of firefighters who are women and the consequent dearth of women in senior firefighter roles. Colleagues recognise the desire to diversify the workforce but misunderstand why it's necessary, often citing that 'we just need the best person for the job'. The need to widen the spectrum of people who choose to apply is understood poorly and further education is needed on the benefits of positive action.

2025

Our workplaces are welcoming and free from bullying and harassment. We feel valued and look forward to coming to work, it's enjoyable and fun, and colleagues support each other when needed. We have an environment in which colleagues are recognised and rewarded for their contributions, excellence and success are celebrated.

We're inclusive, colleagues don't need to 'fit in', they are welcomed as who they are. We recognise the importance of diversity and attract people from any background to apply. We must be, and be seen to be, inclusive to achieve these aims.

We know we make a positive difference to public safety, as individuals and teams. Schisms created by expectation and language - operational/non-operational, green book/grey book, uniformed/non-uniformed, and wholetime/on-call - are diminishing and challenged.

We are one team that exists to help the public be safer, working in collaboration and often colocated with partners. Everyone has equal importance because every job adds essential value to ultimately keeping the public safe. Enabling Services staff enable Frontline staff to deliver, one can't exist without the other, so differentiation doesn't create divide or unconscious hierarchy. The Frontline includes everyone who delivers a service directly to the public and this part of the organisation must be as big as possible to maximise public safety. Individuals can work in both parts, for example as an administrator who also delivers Firesetter interventions or a mechanic who's also an on-call firefighter.

Finance

2019

The service previously faced significant financial challenges, the budget exceeding income and uncertainty or disagreement about how to address it.

The situation has improved significantly and understanding of finances is sound. We still face financial challenge, but it's manageable and the immediate dilemma has been averted.

We're devising plans to return to a balanced budget without reliance on reserves. Transform 2020 has identified savings, albeit limited by those previously achieved. Amending the current Integrated Risk Management Plan can make the further savings needed. This will be challenging however as it's likely to affect crewing arrangements, duty systems or resource provision. Close and trusting work with colleagues and their representative bodies is paramount.

The impact of the savings already made is significant. Suspending the capital programme stops us from investing to modernise our estate, fleet and equipment. This affects culture and organisational capability. We have a strong intent to exceed our savings target to free money for investment borrowing.

2025

We are financially sustainable and can confidently deal with fluctuations in income and expenditure. Reserves are well managed and we can always justify levels. Our budget exceeds our operating costs, so investment funding is available for capital projects that improve our abilities and the safety and wellbeing of all colleagues.

Budget holding is devolved to the appropriate level and we avoid surprises in expenditure. Budget holders understand their role and responsibility and receive appropriate development to manage their finances.

Estate and Collaboration

2019

Too much of our estate is dilapidated. Buildings are crumbling, uncomfortable and uninspiring. They are not welcoming for public use and facilities are inappropriate for a diverse workforce or visitors. Stations such as Northallerton, Scarborough and Richmond are not fit for purpose or appropriate to share with other organisations.

Sharing a headquarters with the police is an excellent move. It will bring disruption and colleagues will take time to adjust to the new surroundings and working alongside police colleagues. However, it will save money and, even more importantly, provide a more suitable workplace for colleagues to share and collaborate between our organisations.

Existing estate collaborations appear largely successful, despite taking place in buildings that weren't originally designed for it. Cultural issues I'm aware of in other places appear less pronounced and police and fire colleagues enjoy working alongside each other. The transport and logistics hub is an excellent shared facility and well located to service the county and city.

2025

We continue to share a headquarters, and transport and logistics hub with North Yorkshire Police. We have a joint emergency services Training Centre if it's economically viable and if partners share the appetite. Service delivery - Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience - operates from at least 38 fire and rescue stations. We have at least 46 station based fire and rescue response vehicles plus specials. Our control room is technologically advanced and maintains resilience through physical and system security, and a geographically distant fallback partner. A long-term programme is in place to relocate, rebuild or renovate the estate on a prioritised basis, providing facilities for our more diverse workforce and useful public places.

Fleet and Equipment

2019

New fire engines and equipment are high quality, modern and fit for purpose. They provide excellent tools for firefighters to carry out their response function.

However, older fire engines are not fitted with modern technology such as passive and active safety features or electronic pump controls. We have not embraced modern firefighting techniques that are in place in other fire and rescue services. In future we'll use the more up to date technology that is commonplace in other services, expanding our use of foam systems and considering use of high pressure misting systems.

Some equipment is not up to modern day standards, of particular note the use of analogue Breathing Apparatus Entry Control Boards as opposed to an electronic telemetry system. While we can still put in place a safe system of work, it isn't as good as it could be. This is a

significant concern that I'd like to address quickly and need to free up funding to do so. Modern eDraulic rescue equipment is also only sporadically available throughout the service and it would be helpful to put a programme in place to replace the current hydraulic equipment.

These are examples of the improvements that can be made. It's important to emphasise that we can and do provide an appropriate and safe response to incidents, but there is room to improve.

Our light vehicle fleet appears modern and fit for purpose. The decision to buy vehicles for response officers instead of a 'user chooser' lease agreement is appropriate. It provides a small saving, greater certainty around costs, suitable vehicles that are fit for purpose and consistency in provision. We have not invested in vehicle telemetry that would allow us to monitor use and mileage, and ultimately rationalise the fleet to create overall savings.

2025

The Response fleet is based on multiple types of firefighting vehicle alongside special appliances. Newer technologies are provided on vehicles to maximise the work that can be undertaken by different crew numbers. Breathing Apparatus telemetry is standard. Suitable Personal Protective Equipment is provided for different types of work, more than only compartment firefighting kit.

Different vehicles and crewing arrangements maximise availability, providing an appropriate capability for local risk while maintaining our ability to deal with large scale incidents. Not every station has a traditional Type B appliance as the current 'one size fits all' model dictates.

Vehicle telemetry as standard monitors use, mileage and efficiency to enable evidence based fleet planning.

Enabling Services

2019

Enabling services are lean, resource has reduced during the last ten years of austerity. This is demonstrated by the difficulty in identifying large scale savings through Transform 2020.

Colleagues are committed to carrying out their roles effectively and do so, mistakes appear uncommon. They are aware of the positive difference they make and their importance to us being able to deliver services. Technology could improve the efficiency of enabling services, too many tasks are still done by hand with time consuming duplication. There are also some concerns about the reliability of ICT connections at remote locations; these will be addressed by CHIRP (move of data to a cloud base instead of our own servers) however in the meantime it causes frustration and some inefficiency.

2025

Enabling Services are well regarded, efficient and sustainable. They enable the organisation and the Service Delivery teams to function. They operate through Enable North Yorkshire in a variety of models. Career pathways are in place from apprentice to senior management so colleagues can develop into and between new roles.

Self-service for Enabling Services is commonplace with technology allowing agile and flexible working, improving efficiency and effectiveness. Specialists in any function focus their attention on the most complex aspects of their role, the more straightforward aspects being managed by the service user. This creates capacity to further develop and continuously improve. Specialists feel valued and fulfilled.

Service Delivery

2019

We are committed to delivering good services and we do so. We make a positive difference to public safety and are well regarded by those who use our services, however we can't always objectively evidence this.

District and local managers adapt their approach to local need. They take seriously their leadership role in balancing service delivery to best meet their community's needs. They are willing to take risks and to find new partnerships and approaches to improve performance.

Prevention services are delivered by a range of colleagues, including a number who are dedicated to this role. Safe and Well visits broaden the improvement we make to people's lives and enhance our relationship with partners. The colleagues dedicated to the role are uninhibited by convention and go over and above to secure the safety and wellbeing of clients. They do well at targeting vulnerability. Station based colleagues also perform a prevention role, however it's too often considered a bolt on part of their response role instead of a core function. We could use data to target interventions more effectively, citing lack of capacity to analyse the data sets available. This hampers our ability to fully target our work and is bound to create some inefficiency. Station based colleagues are reluctant to engage beyond their rolemap while the national pay dispute is in place. However, they refer clients to other agencies where they find concern, it's in their psyche to help.

Protection services are impressive. A wider range of staff than in most services are qualified to carry out inspection and audit and this greatly enhances our capacity. Dedicated Protection colleagues are well qualified and target their efforts to where it's most effective. There is a real appetite to take action and prosecute businesses that fail to comply with regulations, often correctly accepting a risk to us should a prosecution fail. The track record of success is excellent.

Response to incidents is taken seriously. The control room has a modern system for handling calls, and mobilising and managing resources. Work is underway to ensure the system links to related systems, including the one for on-call availability. It operates with low staff levels which would affect resilience in the event of a significant loss due to pandemic

Andrew Brodie, 1 May 2019

illness or industrial action. However, the resilience provided through fallback arrangement with Cornwall mitigates the risk. The self-rostering duty systems work well and is welcomed by most Firefighters (Control), but not all. We develop and assess incident commanders effectively and can rely on them to manage incidents well. A debrief process is in place to learn and share from experience. Firefighters have access to risk information and appear to be technically and professionally competent. There isn't a stated attendance standard so the public don't know what they can expect. We need to consider providing a standard, however to create a single standard isn't straightforward due to the geography of our area and the differing duty systems in place. We'll need to be smart in how we go about it and ensure appropriate Prevention, Protection and Resilience work is done in areas where our emergency response is slower. The nature and culture of firefighters however is that they always respond as quickly as they can.

Some colleagues feel selection and promotion processes can be opaque and unfair. I don't have firm evidence of this, however the perception of the issue is important in itself and needs to be addressed.

2025

Our Integrated Risk Management and Service Delivery Plan carefully balances use of four Service Delivery tools - Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience - to reduce the likelihood and severity of incidents.

Service Delivery is based on three principles:

- *Responsibility and accountability: The safety of local communities is owned by local managers.*
- *Freedom and flexibility: Local managers can plan and design interventions, encouraging creativity and innovation from their teams.*
- *Measurement and monitoring: Output and outcomes are evaluated and assessed so resources can be directed to approaches that have the best results.*

A framework of seven tools is used locally to plan and design our work - enabling tools of Planning, Partnership and Performance Monitoring, and the delivery tools listed above. Their use is systematic and deliberate, and balanced flexibly to meet changing needs,

Local risk management is intelligence led, combining easily accessed data and the knowledge of crews. It's focused on our legislative duties. When we work on behalf of others we can demonstrate safety benefits for clients and a link to our legislative duties.

Dedicated Prevention and Protection teams focus on the most vulnerable people and businesses, sharing data extensively with partners. Community Safety Officers work on behalf of partners and vice versa; clients deal with a single agency whenever possible. Fire Protection Officers work to a risk based programme that can flex if new information or hazards emerge.

The dedicated Prevention and Protection Officers provide an internal service to station based crews in addition to their intelligence driven and planned work. They support and educate them to manage their most vulnerable clients and businesses.

Prevention and Protection Officers have a career path from apprentice to management positions with qualifications available.

Station based crews build capacity by balancing their work across all four service delivery tools, tailoring it to local risk. They challenge each other as to whether their activities maximise the safety of their community, changing if they could be doing something more effective. They accompany dedicated Prevention and Protection Officers if they've referred difficult cases; this improves their own capability.

We have varied career paths with fair and transparent selection, development and promotion practices.

Members of the public can bolster our capacity by volunteering. Volunteers are developed, qualified, assessed and monitored appropriately to maintain excellence and provide opportunities for self and organisational improvement.

Response Resource Availability

2019

Wholetime availability is excellent. However on-call availability is lower than it could be. The public expect that every fire appliance is available at all times, but this isn't the case. During 2018/19 average availability was 80%, a drop from 83% in 2017/18. Some on-call stations achieve 100% while others are as low as 40%.

On-call availability is struggling nationally. The current payment scheme, terms and conditions, and contracts are no longer suitable for modern society. On-call firefighters work flexibly and commit to an extraordinary extent for the good of their community. They are paid little and asked to give a huge commitment in return.

It is cumbersome and bureaucratic for on-call firefighters to achieve competence and for their managers to support them to do so. The system is paper based and takes too long. New on-call firefighters often haven't fully considered how the role will impact on their and their family's lives or what the role involves. Their initial training is time consuming and must be fitted around their full-time jobs. For these reasons on-call firefighters too often leave soon after joining,

We operate a 'one size fits all' approach to fire engine provision, notwithstanding Tactical Response Vehicles when they're back on the run. This requires a minimum crew of four that can't always be achieved at On-call stations due to a lack of firefighters and the pressure of family, lifestyle and full-time job commitments.

2025

On-call availability is close to 100%. An environment exists where individual On-call crews are held responsible for maintaining appliance availability. Proper, salaried pay arrangements attract and retain firefighters who have greater flexibility in their contracts and training commitments. Some stations have vehicles that enable them to safely respond with a variety of crewing numbers, including fewer than four, but often maintaining the ability to crew with four if available. A full-time colleague works on each station, shared with other agencies such as police, ambulance service and local authority. They attract new firefighters and work with local employers and schools to maximise availability. Local performance information, including availability, is shared regularly with the public and local councillors.

New on-call firefighters are clear about what to expect and the expectations of them. They use an electronic system to record their development and demonstrate competence. The competence pathway is clear and managers can flexibly adapt training events to speed up the process.

Performance Management and Reporting

2019

Links between the Commissioner's priorities for fire and rescue through to individual appraisals is not clear. We are overburdened by strategies, plans, policies and procedures. The overall approach isn't well understood by colleagues who don't easily recognise the importance of their role or where it fits.

We could improve the way we measure our service delivery performance, however we meet the data collection expectations set by Government.

Nationally collected data is often about the public's performance, recording the number and impact of fires and other incidents we attend. We don't demonstrate the causal effect of our service delivery work on public safety in terms of the changes we make to the behaviours and attitudes that affect incident demand. This makes it difficult to redirect our effort and resource to where we know it has the greatest impact. This isn't to say the work we do isn't appropriate and effective, it's that we can't evidence that it is.

Our data function is under-resourced with only two full-time equivalent posts. This means we can't maximise our use of data to identify vulnerability or to measure our performance. Changes have been made to our Transform 2020 approach to free up resource to bolster the size and capacity of this team.

2025

Colleagues understand their role in delivering our overall promise to the public. There is a combined Policing & Crime and Fire & Rescue Plan, further reinforcing the synergies between the two organisations. Our combined Integrated Risk Management and Service Delivery Plan delivers the Commissioner's priorities and lets the public know what they can expect from their fire and rescue service. Our performance against plan delivery can be

monitored and assessed. Our strategies are pragmatic and are delivered by functional and team plans. Individual appraisals have clear links to delivering team plans and colleague's performance can be assessed.

We can demonstrate the causal effect of our work on public safety. We can show the type and amount of work we've done and the difference it's made to behaviours. We can link behavioural changes to changes in demand and the impact of incidents. This enables us to demonstrate the value we add. It evidences the funding levels needed and the difference more funding and activity would provide.

The public know how we spend their money; how much is spent, what it's spent on and what we achieve. The Value for Money we provide is obvious and transparent.

Corporate Management Board

2019

The Corporate Management Board demonstrates ability and commitment. Honest, open dialogue and debate takes place and there's a real desire to reach consensus. Important decisions are made with care and consideration, appropriate time being spent in line with the importance of the issue. The corporate memory provided by longer standing members of the Board is essential to ensure past experience influences current decision making.

The Board is small compared to many other services. Board colleagues have broad roles and there is limited time to pause, reflect and strategise. The creation of Enable will improve capacity. However, there is a danger that the number of people with a seat on the Board will reduce and that diversity will be adversely affected. This needs to be carefully managed and every opportunity taken to maximise diversity.

2025

The Corporate Management Board is diverse and stable. It has a blend of longer standing and newer members, technical experts sit as specialist advisors to the board. Decision making is open and transparent with papers, minutes and decision logs published publically. Colleagues who are not members of the Board can influence decisions and contribute to discussions. Capacity has been freed to enable Board members to adopt roles in the National Fire Chiefs Council to ensure we have wider influence and can learn from other services.