



Association of
Police and Crime
Commissioners



PFCCs MAKING A DIFFERENCE

FIRE AND RESCUE GOVERNANCE IN FOCUS

Delivering an efficient and effective fire and rescue service in England

PFCCs MAKING A DIFFERENCE FIRE AND RESCUE GOVERNANCE IN FOCUS (ENGLAND)

Executive Summary from Philip Allott, APCC National Lead for Fire and PFCC for North Yorkshire

I AM DELIGHTED TO INTRODUCE THE LATEST REPORT FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONERS' (APCC) IN FOCUS SERIES.



It showcases the work of elected Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners (PFCCs) in delivering efficient and effective fire and rescue governance on behalf of the communities we serve.

In 2017, legislation was passed enabling the transfer of fire and rescue governance from unelected Fire and Rescue Authorities to directly elected PFCCs, subject to Home Secretary approval (**legislation for England only**). To date, this optional legislation has successfully been progressed in Essex, Northamptonshire, North Yorkshire and Staffordshire.

In this report, you will find examples of the significant benefits and opportunities that the PFCC role offers to the public and to fire and rescue services. For example, PFCCs:

- Provide strong **local accountability**, with PFCCs directly elected by the public every four years and directly accountable to the communities they serve.
- Deliver **direct public participation and engagement** by consulting the public on local priorities, ensuring people have a real say on how fire and rescue services are run and delivered in their area.
- Deliver **value for money** on behalf of the public by setting an open and transparent fire and rescue service budget based on local priorities, and ensuring the funding is effectively spent on key fire and rescue services which directly benefit local communities.
- Enhance public safety by enabling **greater collaboration across blue light services**, including initiatives such as: sharing of fire and police buildings where it delivers real benefits to the public; sharing of some back-office services which can save money in order for it to be re-invested back into valuable front line services.
- Have oversight of both fire and policing which also allows PFCCs to identify areas of shared risk and explore how both emergency services can work together to **protect the vulnerable**.

Further examples featured within this report include PFCC-led responses to the unique challenges associated with the Covid19 pandemic, which underline the vital leadership and convening role that PFCCs deliver in their communities.



Additionally, we present case studies from two current Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) who set out their ambition to deliver improvements across fire and rescue services in their area, applying the tried and tested approaches that have successfully delivered change and improvements in policing.

The Home Office's review of the PCC model, published in March 2021, recognised how effective PCC oversight in policing and criminal justice could drive similar improvements and ensure greater accountability if more PCCs were to take on fire governance. This element of the review will be taken forward in a **Government White Paper** on fire reform which will be published shortly.

I hope you find this report of interest and encourage you to share with colleagues and partners.

Foreword from Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Fire

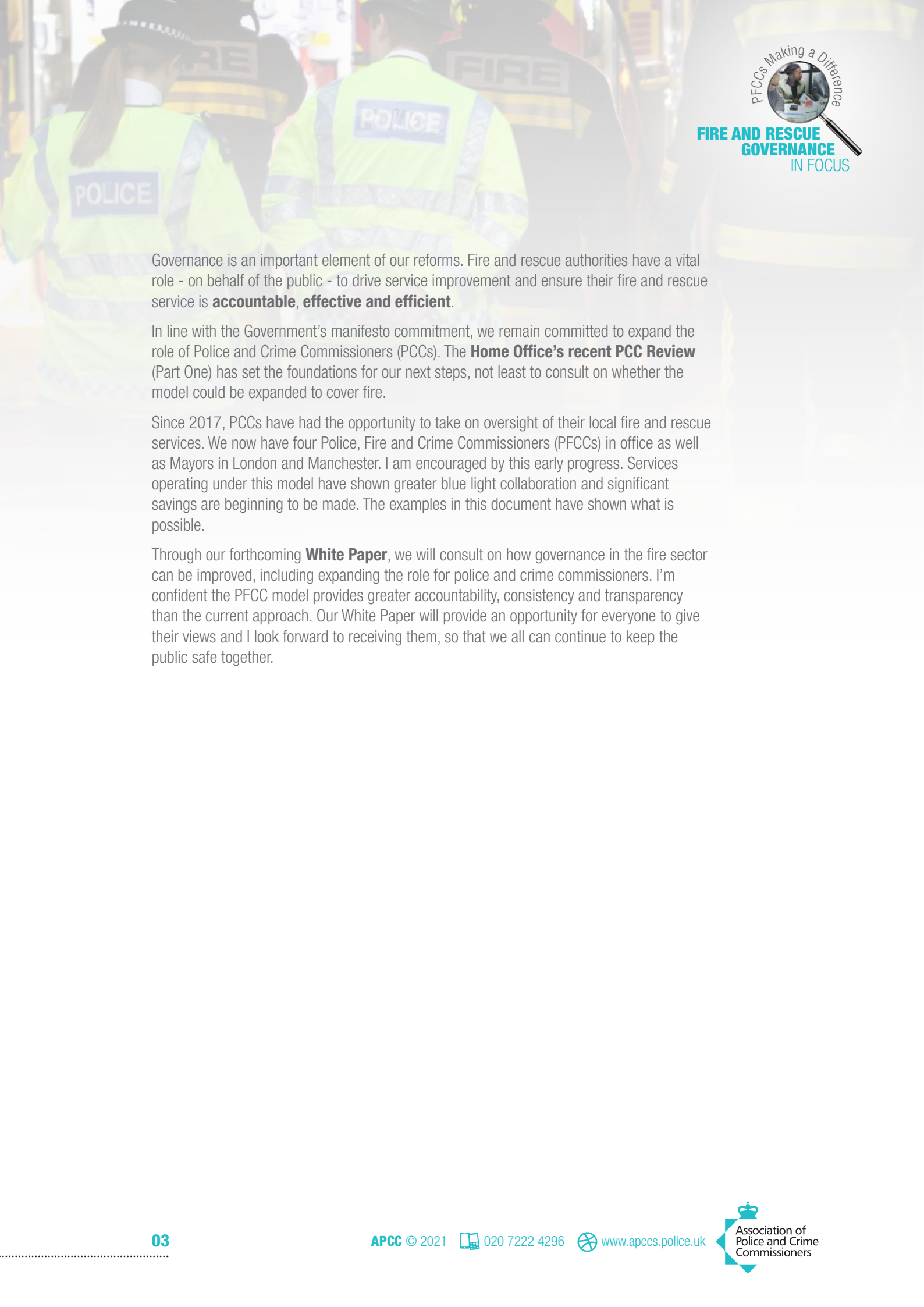
It has been 16 months since my appointment as **joint Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office**. During that time, the pandemic has challenged us all, but I have been struck by support that fire and rescue services have provided to their communities during the pandemic. That said, I've also seen first-hand examples of where fire and rescue services can and should do better, and where we can make improvements, not only for services and their employees, but for the wider public.



The recommendations made during Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Kerslake Review and reports from the new Fire inspectorate have made it clear that we must bring forward proposals that can deliver a greater public focus, higher standards and greater consistency across fire and rescue services.

Despite some meaningful reforms over recent years, we know there is much further to go to overcome the barriers that are holding services back.

I'm committed to work with the fire and rescue leaders to implement systemic reform to ensure fire and rescue services are ready for the challenges of the 21st century. Our forthcoming fire reform plan - which should be published later this year - is centred around driving improvements in three key areas: **Professionalism, People and Governance**. Taken together, I believe improvements in these areas will help us deliver on the recommendations from the inquiries and inspection reports and create modern services able to best meet future challenges.



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Governance is an important element of our reforms. Fire and rescue authorities have a vital role - on behalf of the public - to drive service improvement and ensure their fire and rescue service is **accountable, effective and efficient**.


In line with the Government's manifesto commitment, we remain committed to expand the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). The **Home Office's recent PCC Review** (Part One) has set the foundations for our next steps, not least to consult on whether the model could be expanded to cover fire.

Since 2017, PCCs have had the opportunity to take on oversight of their local fire and rescue services. We now have four Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners (PFCCs) in office as well as Mayors in London and Manchester. I am encouraged by this early progress. Services operating under this model have shown greater blue light collaboration and significant savings are beginning to be made. The examples in this document have shown what is possible.

Through our forthcoming **White Paper**, we will consult on how governance in the fire sector can be improved, including expanding the role for police and crime commissioners. I'm confident the PFCC model provides greater accountability, consistency and transparency than the current approach. Our White Paper will provide an opportunity for everyone to give their views and I look forward to receiving them, so that we all can continue to keep the public safe together.

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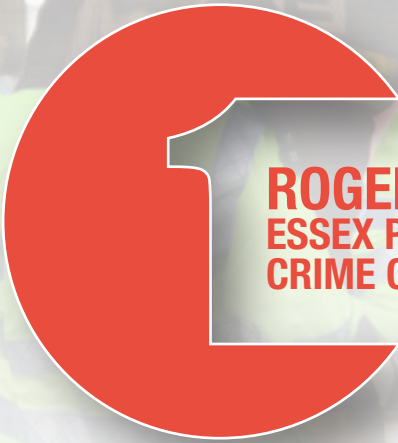
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ROGER HIRST
ESSEX POLICE FIRE AND
CRIME COMMISSIONER



WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE ESSEX SAFER

Prior to 2017 Essex County Fire and Rescue Service had been labelled as having a toxic culture with widespread public claims of bullying and harassment within the Service. Local MPs, Councils and Partners found the Service hard to work with while its cultural issues were severely impacting on its ability to innovate and deliver more for its communities.

Having successfully secured a strong public mandate for change in the 2016 PCC election, Roger Hirst worked with partners to set out the benefits of joint governance and secure the government’s support. The case for change identified significant financial efficiencies but most importantly the chance to deliver a better service to the public and save lives.

GIVING THE PUBLIC AND PARTNERS A STRONGER VOICE

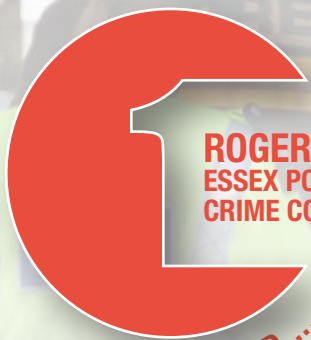
In October 2017 Mr Hirst became the first Police Fire and Crime Commissioner in the country.

Due to the strong governance model a robust cultural change programme has been completed delivering increased public transparency, accountability, and building a much stronger connection with local communities.



Partners from across Essex have sought the Service out to work with them on new projects. A new Joint Education Team was developed that now regularly reaches over 200,000 children each year, 98% of all primary children in Essex, with community safety messages. The team were also the first Fire and Rescue Service in the country to move their content online to support teaching from home after schools had been forced to close because of Covid19.

Working with local Community Safety Partnerships, the Service now has a vital role in identifying, reaching, and supporting some of the most vulnerable in society. Whether through the 4,000 Safe and Well visits undertaken each year, Surround a Town Days or youth orientated programmes such as Fire Bikes and Firebreaks, teams can engage with groups that other services cannot reach and deliver tailored safety advice on behalf of all of the partners.



ROGER HIRST
ESSEX POLICE FIRE AND
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Democratic accountability has also prospered, with senior leaders from the Service now sitting with local council and police leaders holding regular public meetings with local communities. Unlike other areas, the people of Essex also had the opportunity to have a say in the future of the Service through the 2021 PFCC election. They took this opportunity and voted for more collaboration, more partnership work and an even stronger focus on delivering for their communities.

LEADING THROUGH A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

These changes have resulted in more than just words. During the Covid19 pandemic, senior leaders in Essex County Fire and Rescue Service took joint leadership of the **Essex Resilience Forum** and the **Strategic Coordination Group**. This was done at the request of local councils, something that was unthinkable four years ago before the PFCC changes. Standing shoulder to shoulder with Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service led the response on behalf of the county. Despite the unique challenges presented by the pandemic, the standing, confidence, and relationships that the Service has been able to build have pushed it to the fore.

Within a short space of time, the Service has gone from a side-lined voice, distant and not recognised by councils and partners to the **heart of our emergency response**. Firefighter roles have rightly remained separate from policing and not merged; they have not lost their neutrality. Instead the support they have from the community has grown. Whether they have been driving ambulances, repurposing community hospitals, planning the logistics of PPE supply or leading our response, they have been at the centre, respected, listened to and **acknowledged for their unique and valuable contribution**.

Mr Hirst said: *“For me, safe and secure communities are the bedrock on which we build well-being and prosperity for all. **This requires all emergency services to work well together recognising the unique strengths of each and working together for the benefit of the public.**”*

“We want firefighters to be firefighters and police officers to be police officers, but both can do better and be better by working together. Working together to be efficient and effective in the service they provide, to prevent incidents wherever possible and to be closely embedded in the communities they serve. Having an efficient and effective response when it is needed is crucial but for me, preventing incidents from happening in the first place is just as important.”

As well as improving the standing of the Service and promoting stronger public accountability, there were also considerable **financial benefits** arising from the change to the PFCC model which have been reinvested in the Service. To date, **£11.15m worth of savings** have been identified through a collaboration programme overseen by the PFCC, with more savings predicted as Essex continues to develop and deliver on the ideas within the business case. These saving have been invested back into frontline service, considerably improving the training our firefighters receive, the resources invested in protection activity and the quantity and effectiveness of our prevention activity.





ROGER HIRST
ESSEX POLICE FIRE AND
CRIME COMMISSIONER

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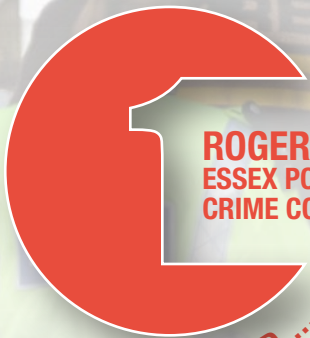
**FIRE AND RESCUE
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Other key examples of how bringing policing and fire governance together have helped to keep people safe, include:

- The country's **first joint police and fire investigation dog**, provides unique support to police officers and firefighters and is a specific example of the improved joint working we are seeing between the services.
- **A Tri-service Rural Community Officer pilot** targeting rural and remote areas that previously may have been isolated. The Tri-service Community Officers embed fire, police and ambulance skills within rural communities, offering a range of life-saving prevention advice and support. This pilot is the first step to transforming the coordinated support available to rural and isolated communities where an early response can save lives.
- Work with the **National Police Estates Group** - by bringing fire and police under one governance model, Essex has benefitted from the ability to speak with authority and one voice. This approach **radically changes outdated planning processes** that fail to recognise the need for and importance of consulting with emergency services when planning major housing developments. As statutory consultees, fire and police are placed on the same footing as education and health partners, providing sound advice that will design out crime and fire risk in local communities, unlike before.

Further exciting projects on the horizon include co-location of fire and police teams in Harwich and Dovercourt, wider roll out of Tri-service Rural Community Officers, as well as a commitment to explore further shared estates opportunities with the aim of making savings that will go back into each bluelight service. The PFCC has also discussed with East of England Ambulance Service leads how they can be involved in estates discussions, raising the potential for **further public savings.**





ROGER HIRST
ESSEX POLICE FIRE AND
CRIME COMMISSIONER

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Over the course of the Covid19 pandemic, the PFCC has worked with health partners to ensure fire and police support has been made available where possible. The Chief Constable of Essex Police and Deputy Chief Fire Officer co-chaired the **Essex Resilience Forum** with a joined-up approach embodying the commitment of personnel from both services to protecting the public and collaborating with each other. The services learnt from and supported each other and had greater capacity to support the wider response. Examples of this commitment include firefighters and staff admirably driving ambulances and helping to build emergency hospitals and vaccination centres, even staffing them as volunteers on top of their daily duties at the height of the pandemic.

Mr Hirst added: *"I'm so proud of our Police and Fire and Rescue services; what we have achieved in Essex is stimulating activity in other areas. The recent Home Office review of PCCs has raised the question that eventually all elected Police and Crime Commissioners in England should take on joint governance. Essex is a county that makes things happen and by working together we make those things happen to help keep our residents safe."*



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TO FIND OUT MORE YOU CAN READ THE
ESSEX FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN AT:

<https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/what-we-are-doing/fire-rescue-strategy/>

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**STEPHEN MOLD
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE
FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**



IN JANUARY 2019, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (NFRS) BECAME THE FIRST SERVICE TO TRANSFER FROM A COUNTY COUNCIL TO AN ELECTED POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PFCC).

Looking back to arrangements before the transfer, the service was in a **challenging position**, with an un-ringfenced budget in what was a cash-strapped council under Special Measures. NFRS had **no support structure**, no financial independence or ability to plan and no recognition of its unique role as an emergency service.

An **independent inspection** led by HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service) in 2018 confirmed that **years of under-investment** and a **lack of scrutiny** had unfortunately taken their toll on the Service. Concerns were identified for performance and inspectors acknowledged how the service was **'operating in a very tight financial environment'**: core spending power was the **second lowest in the country**, there were **no reserves** and **no capital plan to fund vital training, equipment, and vehicle replacement programmes**.

Northamptonshire PFCC Stephen Mold said: *"The benefits of bringing together two emergency services under the same governance were clear to me. Sharing buildings and support would make sense to the public and mean both services could make progress and closer operational collaboration would benefit emergency response and public safety.*

"I was convinced that freed from the constraints of the county council, NFRS could turn itself around and once again remind the people of Northamptonshire of the unique contribution it makes to the safety of this county. And that is exactly what we have seen happen."

Since the transfer of governance to the PFCC in January 2019, NFRS has made rapid and sustained improvements.

Now, there is a separate fire precept and the PFCC has a duty to consult the public, ensuring they have a voice and can determine priorities for the Service.





STEPHEN MOLD
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE
FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

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This engagement has enabled people to show their support for their fire service and see their priorities reflected in the Commissioner's Fire Plan.

Additionally, for the first time, **Chief Fire Officer Darren Dovey** has autonomy over a ring-fenced budget, enabling him to plan and address key priorities including fire response times and pump availability - improvements which have been sustained.

The move to the elected PFCC has also improved transparency and a direct link with public priorities. NFRS is now **openly accountable to the public**, with open and accessible scrutiny of decisions.

Other positive developments in NFRS linked to the governance change include a renewed investment in the development and wellbeing of the Service's people - **for the first time in over 10 years there has been an increase in the number of firefighters**, from 242 to 254 - and greater collaboration with policing partners.

For example, the service is now on a much firmer footing, **promoting the wellbeing of firefighters** and bringing in **new and diverse talent**, as well as significantly **increasing resilience** and capacity in the priority areas of **Prevention, Protection and Safeguarding**.

In terms of collaboration, fire and police now share business services with IT, fleet, estates, HR and Finance teams now coming under single leads. This has created a strong, professional support structure and both organisations **benefit from best practice and innovation**.



Shared buildings encourage closer working relationships and interoperability is strengthened. A Joint Operations Team co-ordinates response plans and a Joint Operational Learning Forum, with senior representation from both organisations, has been tasked with breaking down cultural barriers to improve public safety and response.

Mr Dovey said: *"The change in governance gave us the opportunity to flourish and to align ourselves more clearly with the other emergency services that are keeping the public safe."*

"We have the ability to plan for the future and we are not only more accountable to the public under the Commissioner's governance, but we also have an ability to be part of the national conversation on the future development of the fire service."

Mr Mold added: *"I want to make this county a safer place. Improving fire service performance and creating stability has been a great start, and now I am excited by the opportunity to work with the Chief Fire Officer to see how change can create an even stronger role for our fire service in community safety."*

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BEN ADAMS STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER



POLICE AND FIRE COLLABORATION IN STAFFORDSHIRE SHOWS CLEAR BENEFITS

Staffordshire was the second area in England where governance of fire and rescue was transferred to an elected Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC). Under the PFCC's oversight and scrutiny, collaborative work has brought real benefits to how fire and police work together to keep communities safe, and delivered significant financial benefits.

Key to this success has been ongoing engagement with fire service staff, as well as the previous Commissioner's wide-ranging consultation with the public about fire service governance. Now, with a full-time Commissioner overseeing fire, decisions are taken in partnership with the Service's leadership on a daily basis.

Fire Minister Lord Stephen Greenhalgh recently visited Staffordshire to see for himself the joint **fire and police building** in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. Police response teams were previously located separately in an outdated station a short walk from the purpose-built fire station. This made no sense, particularly when the new fire building had space to include emergency service colleagues.

Now, with the introduction of a bold joint estates plan, fire and police teams have been brought together in a modern facility, with public money no longer unnecessarily misspent on separate buildings.

Hanley is not the only example of savings delivered by bringing fire and police teams together. Joint estates exist in Tamworth, and there are also shared support services in areas including procurement, human resources, finance and corporate communications teams.

Bringing the teams together is delivering annual **savings of over £300,000**, and likely capital gains of **£2.5m** from selling two old police stations. When added to cashable savings arising from the move away from an unelected fire and rescue authority to a single, elected PFCC, and the new collaboration arrangements, annual **savings will total more than £1m** by 2022/23.

Through **reinvestment into both services**, these funds will make them better placed to serve our communities, keeping them safe through increased capacity and training.





BEN ADAMS
STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE FIRE
AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

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PFCCs Making a Difference



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Changes realised under the PFCC's direction have brought greater consistency, professionalism and quality in the services delivered to Staffordshire's communities.

Closer bluelight working is delivering benefits such as joined-up approaches to protecting vulnerable people, and missing persons searches that take advantage of both services' resources and skills.

Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams is keen to develop this work further: *"We are entering a period of real change, but there is an opportunity not just to demonstrate the benefits of bringing the services together, sharing resources and being stronger together, but also looking forward to what modern 21st century police and fire services should deliver.*

"I believe Staffordshire can be the model for that and we can carry the rest of the country with us."

Both chiefs feel the work has brought rewards beyond the financial benefits.

Chief Fire Officer Becci Bryant said: *"Both organisations are committed to keeping the public safe and working closely together is of great benefit as we share information and learn more about our communities and their needs. I look forward to any future opportunities to collaborate and improve our service to local people."*

Temporary Chief Constable Emma Barnett said: *"Hanley has been a complex project, but a real success story for Staffordshire and an opportunity for the two organisations to work closely together and learn from each other. This can only be a positive for our communities in terms of service delivery as well as efficiency and cost saving."*



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**PHILIP ALLOTT
NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE FIRE
AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**



IN NOVEMBER 2018, NORTH YORKSHIRE’S POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PFCC) TOOK OVER THE GOVERNANCE OF NORTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE, AND IN DOING SO INHERITED A BUDGET WITH A £1.2M ANNUAL IMBALANCE, FORECAST TO INCREASE TO AT LEAST £2.5M, AND NO CREDIBLE PLAN TO BRING MUCH NEEDED FINANCIAL STABILITY TO THE SERVICE.

Under the direction and oversight of the PFCC, the Service has now secured a recurring balanced financial position. Remarkably, this stability has been delivered in less than 18 months after the governance change took place, with **greater collaboration, improved transparency and financial stability** at the core of the changes made by the PFCC.

Additional work overseen by the PFCC to **stabilise the Service and to deliver value for money** includes bringing North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service closer together through a **joint mission, vision and aligned priorities**, something that could only be delivered under the PFCC model. North Yorkshire’s fire and police services now benefit from a joint estate strategy, bringing firefighters and police officers together in the same buildings, saving money and increasing opportunity to work together on shared risks. The **new police and fire joint headquarters** serves as an effective example of this new approach and has **delivered savings of over £1m a year**, which importantly can be reinvested in lifesaving equipment, up to date training and other areas of the service.



Under the elected PFCC model, there is now a direct link between voters and the oversight of the Service. First and foremost, **the public shape the priorities** and objectives for the Commissioner’s Fire and Rescue Plan via extensive public consultation and engagement. To maintain the identity of both services, the Commissioner’s Fire and Rescue Plan and the Police and Crime Plan are **distinct but reflect a shared direction and commitment to progress collaborative opportunities between both services**. Links with the public have been further enhanced through the PFCC’s **public accountability meetings**, where members of the public can witness PFCC scrutiny and challenge of performance against the two respective plans. These meetings are live-streamed and public engagement encouraged via social media.



PHILIP ALLOTT
NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE FIRE
AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

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PFCCs Making a Difference



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North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Philip Allott has highlighted the importance of this approach: *“This is the first time that priorities for North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service have been clearly and publicly set out and are based on the priorities that the fire service, plus the communities and businesses of the county, have said are important.”*

To maintain and safeguard the future of both emergency services, the PFCC has worked with both the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable to oversee the establishment of a pioneering organisation, **Enable North Yorkshire**. Based at the joint headquarters, Enable North Yorkshire is a **ground-breaking collaboration** that pools the business support functions of both organisations, including HR, ICT, estates, finance and business planning, with the PFCC overseeing and scrutinising progress on behalf of the North Yorkshire public. Ultimately, this approach will strive to unlock more opportunities that will benefit both emergency services, as well as the local communities they serve.

PFCC Philip Allott commented: *“The creation of Enable North Yorkshire has standardised, simplified and aligned services by sharing best practice, delivering our pledge for greater efficiency in support services and generating the capacity for greater co-operation and flexibility when faced with changing requirements in the future.*

“It is a particularly important development for the Fire and Rescue Service which had previously cut business support functions to levels which did not provide a good service for the people and businesses of North Yorkshire and York.”

With closer working relations now embedded, the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable have come together to deliver an exciting new pilot, whereby two Public Safety Officers (PSOs) patrol the streets of North Yorkshire, trained to deliver community safety and prevent harm. PSOs are multi-agency officers with a blend of fire, paramedic, policing and community safety capabilities. They promote fire safety and health and wellbeing, as well as solving local anti-social behaviour concerns.



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PHILIP ALLOTT
NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE FIRE
AND CRIME COMMISSIONER



An independent evaluation has evidenced significant public and stakeholder support for the PSOs and the benefits they offer. As a result, more PSOs will now be recruited, building on the pilot's success.

Whilst the pilot is a response to local community need, there is a clear appreciation of the different jobs North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service do.

Both the police and fire service are, and will continue to be, separate organisations as acknowledged by the PFCC: *"The staff who currently work in the police will continue to be employed by the police, and the staff who work in the fire service will continue to be employed by the fire service. The two services will always have distinct roles, identities and finances - one service's savings will not fund the other".*



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A FORWARD LOOK

PCCs AND FIRE & RESCUE GOVERNANCE IN THE FUTURE:

THE CURRENT PROCESS OF TRANSFERRING FIRE AND RESCUE GOVERNANCE TO PCCs IS OPTIONAL (SEE POLICING & CRIME ACT 2017). WHILST SEVERAL PCCs HAVE PROGRESSED THIS OPTION, OTHERS HAVE CHOSEN TO PAUSE AND AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE GOVERNMENT'S WHITE PAPER ON FIRE REFORM, WHICH WILL CONSULT ON WHETHER TO MANDATE THE TRANSFER OF FIRE GOVERNANCE TO PCCs IN ENGLAND.

PROVIDED BELOW ARE EXAMPLES OF PCC AMBITIONS TO TAKE ON FIRE THAT EXPLAIN THEIR INTENTIONS TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE DEMOCRATIC OVERSIGHT OF FIRE AND RESCUE, FURTHER BLUELIGHT COLLABORATION AND ENSURE THE PUBLIC HAVE THEIR SAY ON HOW THEIR FIRE SERVICES ARE RUN.



E A FORWARD LOOK RUPERT MATTHEWS, PCC FOR LEICESTERSHIRE



“OUR COMMUNITIES DESERVE AN OUTSTANDING RESPONSE TO THEIR SAFETY AND QUITE CLEARLY WE SHOULD EXPLORE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER PROGRESS AND POSITIVE CHANGE. HOW BEST THIS IS ACHIEVED IS STILL SUBJECT TO DEBATE, BUT THE KEY AIM MUST BE TO DELIVER A SERVICE THAT IS BEST FOR THE PUBLIC, NOT THE CONVENIENCE OF THE PROVIDERS.

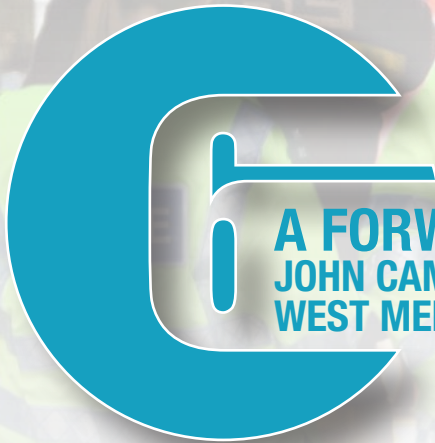
“There will thus be merit in pursuing an approach that can be proven to deliver a more consistent, joined-up style of problem-solving, that better adapts to the challenges of today and that ensures our emergency services not only provide a top-class service but also offer the best value for money.

Elected Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners have added real value to public safety elsewhere. I've seen it in Northamptonshire and appreciate the economies of scale offered by such a model. It is in all our interests - especially the taxpayer's - to take advantage of opportunities to save money while maintaining quality of service. I have also noted the scope for greater collaboration, opportunities to co-locate and other moves that make financial sense and are beneficial for public accessibility and accountability.

“Here in Leicestershire, we are still bound to the original model with two different sets of governance. Some would contend that the fire authority is akin to the former police authority, in that it is a largely anonymous and cumbersome method of oversight. It was this invisibility that led to the introduction of PCCs in 2012 in a move designed to deliver greater local democracy.

“There are major advantages of directly-elected governance - as long as we create clear lines of responsibilities - but for me it comes down to evidence and a thorough examination of the options, both of which the Government White Paper will deliver”.

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A FORWARD LOOK JOHN CAMPION, PCC FOR WEST MERCIA



“I HAVE ALWAYS PROMISED THAT I WOULD LISTEN TO, AND BE GUIDED BY, OUR COMMUNITIES AND THAT IS WHAT HAS BEEN THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND MY DECISION TO PROGRESS MY BUSINESS CASE TO BRING FIRE UNDER A DIRECTLY ELECTED FORM OF GOVERNANCE.

“It has been four years since West Mercia put up a business case and it was identified then that a single governance body would give the best opportunity to improve local police and fire collaboration, efficiency, and ultimately the services delivered to local communities - which I firmly believe is the most important factor. Through greater collaboration, there is the opportunity to improve the pace around reforming estates, allowing it to be much more developed. This change would also strengthen democracy by giving the public a directly elected voice, as opposed to a group of individuals who have no direct accountability to the public.

“To ensure the voices of the communities were included as part of my business case, I carried out a three-month consultation which received over 1,300 responses, 61% of which supported the proposals.

“If there is credible evidence that a change in governance would cost less, achieve more and has public backing, I cannot just ignore that. Within the initial business case, it identified £4m pounds worth of resources that could be realigned to front line services. These identified efficiencies will only improve and bolster the frontline, not take away from it. For those reasons it felt right to further develop these proposals, create a full business case and put it to Government for their consideration.

“Ultimately the direction has now been set by the Government, bringing accountability and transparency through an imminent White Paper, but I remain committed that the changes to fire governance will save public money and be of benefit to the communities of West Mercia, which is ultimately what matters most.”

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CONTRIBUTORS ...



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STEPHEN MOLD:
Northamptonshire Police, Fire
and Crime Commissioner



BEN ADAMS:
Staffordshire Police, Fire and
Crime Commissioner



PHILIP ALLOTT:
North Yorkshire Police, Fire
and Crime Commissioner

A FORWARD LOOK ...



RUPERT MATTHEWS:
PCC for Leicestershire



JOHN CAMPION:
PCC for West Mercia



Association of
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