



# Efficiency Plan Update

2017



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# Efficiency Plan Update 2017

## Our plan

Our Efficiency Plan was submitted to Government in October 2016. This plan was accepted, which resulted in a fixed funding settlement until 2019/20. We were asked by Government to consider four, main areas as part of our Efficiency Plan. These were:

- Flexible working practices
- Increasing collaboration
- Use of reserves
- Transparency and reporting

Under the criteria set out by Government for Fire & Rescue Service Efficiency Plans, we are required to publish an annual update on our progress towards the objectives we set ourselves.

## Our progress

### Flexible working practices

We stated that we would make more fire engines available during the day when we know our demand from incidents, community safety work, risk inspections and operational training is highest.

To meet this objective, we said that we would change the staffing of the second fire engine at our two fire engine stations, so that they would stay available all of the time during the day, but become retained ('on-call') at night. These changes are now in place at Barnsley and Rotherham fire stations, which also mean we are making a greater use on retained firefighters to provide night-time cover at those stations.

We also stated in our Efficiency Plan that the two fire engine stations at Central and Doncaster would undergo the same change. However, a more optimistic medium term financial position means that we believe we no longer have to make these changes. Our promise, in both our Efficiency Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-20, was to provide the best possible service to the people of South Yorkshire within the resources available to us. Therefore, we do not believe we should make these changes unless our financial position makes it absolutely necessary.



Modelling work has now taken place to determine the proposed locations of two additional day-staffing fire engines. As above, these will be available all of the time during the day, but become retained ('on-call') at night. Based upon our current 999 demand, we believe these will be introduced at Parkway fire station and a further South Yorkshire fire station between now and 2019/20, subject to there being no further changes in our Government funding settlement.

## **Increasing collaboration**

We have made significant steps to increase collaboration with our emergency services partners, beyond those areas we had already been delivering before the publication of our Efficiency Plan.

Key developments include:

- A meeting structure has been established at strategic and tactical levels to proactively consider genuine opportunities for meaningful collaboration. These meetings involve decision makers from South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue, South Yorkshire Police and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner.
- Work is underway to create a joint community safety department between ourselves and the police, responsible for collaboratively preventing fires, crimes and other emergencies.
- A joint fire and police station in Maltby, Rotherham has gone operational and is the first facility of its kind in South Yorkshire. We believe it will save money through shared running costs and improve solutions to local problems, such as dealing with anti-social behaviour and road traffic collisions.
- A joint Head of Estates and Fleet Management is being appointed. The new department head will oversee estates and facilities within police and fire, helping to progress our collaboration under a shared strategy with the view of creating a shared service.
- The Local Intervention and Falls Episodes (LIFE) team, which sees fire and police personnel visit homes in Sheffield to reduce fire risk, improve security and help people who have fallen continues to operate. Discussions are underway with local authority partners on what future funding might be available to support the expansion of LIFE, with a focus on early intervention and prevention activity.

## **Use of reserves**

We stated that we would use a significant proportion of our reserves to fund our capital spending programme over the lifetime of our Efficiency Plan. This commitment is now built into our medium term financial strategy.

By using reserves to fund our capital programme, as opposed to borrowing, we can reduce the impact that the capital financing repayments would have on our revenue budget.



Examples of forecast capital projects which will be funded by our reserves include the construction of a replacement fire station in Barnsley, improvements to a firefighter training facility and spending on vehicles and equipment related to some of the operational changes we have committed to making.

## **Transparency and reporting**

We stated that we would publish any further information required of us under the Home Office's reform programme, beyond that which we already publish as part of the local government transparency code.

To meet this, we are supporting the early stages of the development on a national fire service website.

We have also published, following a period of staff and public consultation, an Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-20, which sets out as clearly as possible how we intend to manage local risk and deliver our services to local people over the period covered by our Efficiency Plan.

This update itself forms part of our promise to be as transparent as possible, allowing the public to monitor our progress towards our stated objectives.

## **Our next steps**

We will continue to work towards the objectives set out in our Efficiency Plan and to report upon our progress towards meeting them.

Whilst our approved Efficiency Plan gave us a more stable, medium term financial position, there remains significant uncertainty about how our financial situation might change beyond 2020. Therefore, we are continuing to look at ways we can provide the best value services to local people.

Whilst our Efficiency Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-20 both set out our priorities for how we intend to deliver our services, neither plan tells the whole story of who we are and what we do for our communities. That's why we also working to develop a fresh, longer term vision and purpose, so that every member of staff, regardless of rank or role, knows the part they play in our story.

