

Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



# Integrated risk management plan consultation 2017-2018





## Contents

Introduction	3
Our performance	4
The financial outlook	8
You said, we did	10
Consultation questions	11
How to take part in the consultation	14



## Integrated risk management plan consultation 2017-2018

### Introduction

Funding for your local fire and rescue service comes from two main sources: a government grant, providing approximately 35 per cent of the total; and precept payments from local taxpayers and non-domestic rate-payers in County Durham and Darlington, which make up the remaining 65 per cent.

For the past six years we have transformed the way we provide services to the community in response to a £6m cut in our funding from central government.

In 2016 the Fire Authority agreed to accept the government's offer of a four year funding settlement. This settlement still results in a reduction in government funding of 19 per cent in the medium term, forcing us to consider further proposals to reduce costs.

Before these decisions are made CDDFRS is consulting with people living and working in our area about three proposals which could affect spending and the way the service operates.

In this document, which is linked to our three year strategic plan 2015 to 2018, we have included some background information about the performance of the Service and the vital role we play.

Three consultation questions, including information relating to each one, are set out at the end of this document.

For details about how to respond to the questions as well as a link to the survey, please turn to page 14.

We would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes to take part in our consultation by 20 February. The results will be published in March 2017.

This is your fire and rescue service, funded by you and operating to protect the community. Your help is important to us as we prepare to make future plans and decisions.



Councillor Michele Hodgson  
Chair of the Combined Fire Authority



Stuart Errington  
Chief fire officer





## Our performance

As an emergency service CDDFRS is governed by legislation and national frameworks to ensure that we have the people, equipment and training in place to respond to a wide variety of incidents including:

- Fires of all types
- Road traffic collisions
- Specialist rescues such as those using lifting equipment for injured horses and large animals; rescuing people trapped at height or in confined spaces
- Bariatric rescues
- Wildfires
- Search and rescue operations on rivers, lakes and reservoirs using our swift water boats
- Flood response and incidents involving the pumping of water from homes and buildings
- Incidents involving chemicals and noxious gases.

The Service also has a statutory duty to prepare for incidents where major disruption affecting the people of County Durham and Darlington is likely to occur. These situations include:

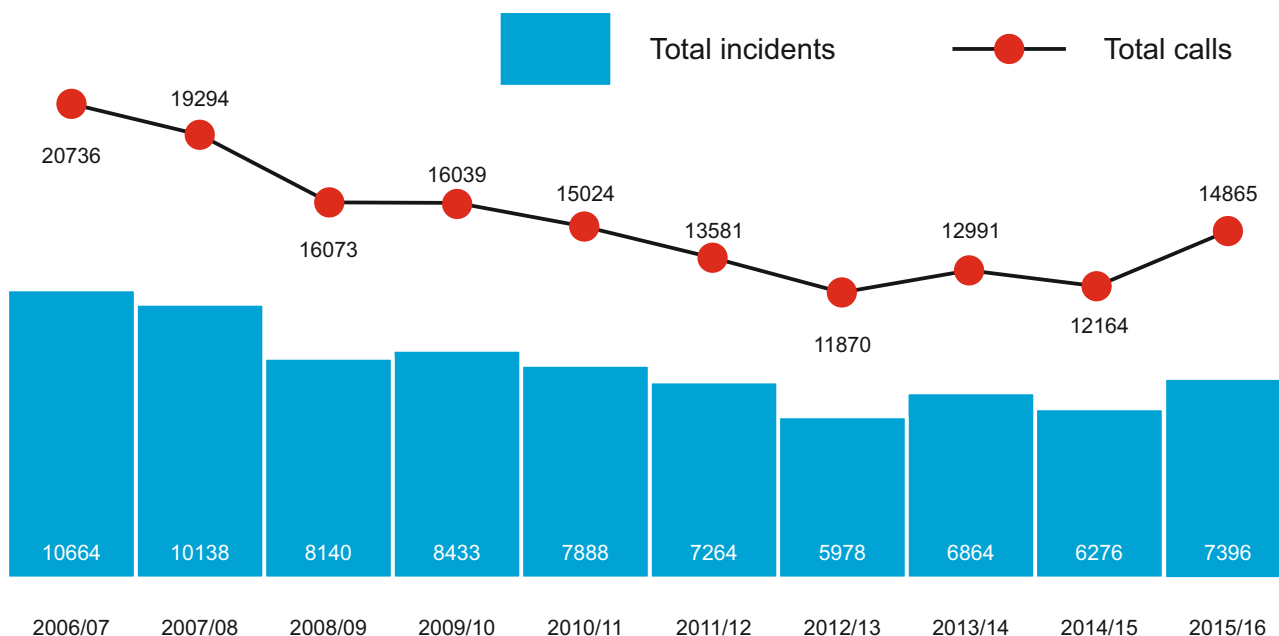
- Severe weather events, such as flash flooding or prolonged and heavy snowfall
- Network power losses
- Major incidents involving fuel and chemical spills
- Public health issues, for example a flu epidemic
- Animal incidents, such as foot and mouth disease.

Due to a comprehensive programme of prevention and protection work, as well as improvements in legislation, which reduce the risk of fire, the number of incidents attended by CDDFRS has decreased during the last ten years with the reduction reaching a plateau between 2012 and 2015.

Although the chart in figure one shows an 18% (1120) increase in incidents in 2015/16, 86% (962) of this increase has been due to the introduction of a trial involving our fire crews responding to life threatening medical emergencies in support of North East Ambulance Service.

This new Emergency Medical Response (EMR) incident type has increased our operational activity and has provided valuable lifesaving treatment to people with serious medical conditions such as heart attacks or respiratory arrest.

Figure one - Total calls and total incidents (2006/07 to 2015/16) - CDDFRS only



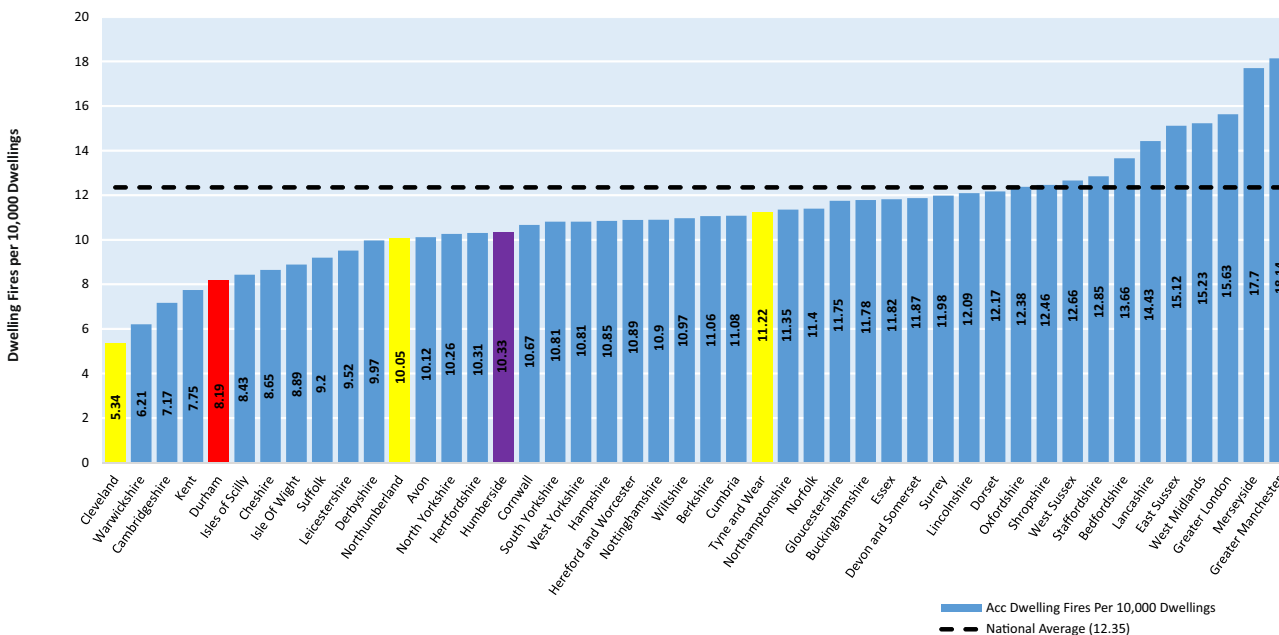


CDDFRS is one of the best performing services nationally for prevention work and it remains committed to reducing all incident types through working in partnership with other agencies, problem solving and introducing new initiatives which reduce risk in the community.

A high priority for the service is to reduce the risk from fire in the home and so, working in partnership, we introduced the Safer Homes initiative in 2014/15. This initiative resulted in

fire and crime awareness training being delivered to more than 3000 frontline staff from partner agencies. These staff have access to homes through their daily work and can offer brief interventions or referrals where needed for more specialist support and advice. As a result we have reduced accidental fires in the home by a further 4.2% during 2015/16 making CDDFRS the fifth best performing service in the country, as illustrated in figure two below.

**Figure two - Accidental dwelling fires Per 10,000 dwellings, by fire and rescue authority 2015/16 - CDDFRS fifth best performing service nationally**



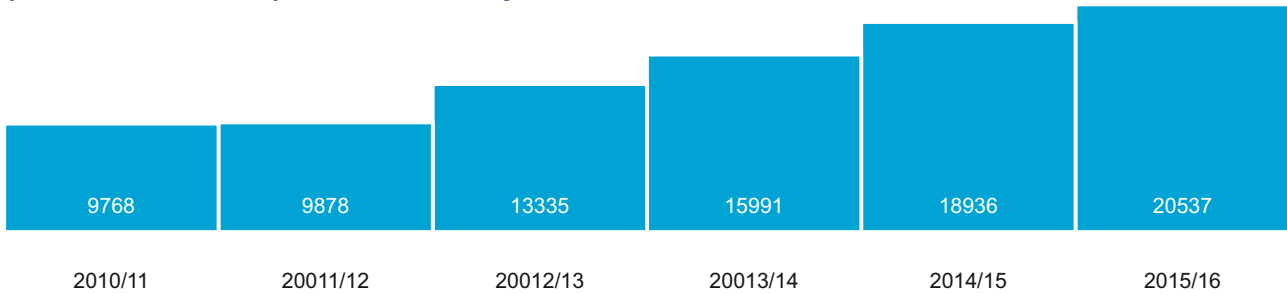
Service most similar to CDDFRS  
 North east fire and rescue services  
 County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

Further to this work we recognise that many people affected by accidental fires in the home have lifestyle factors linked to their personal health and wellbeing, such as smoking, drinking or mental health conditions. To help keep people safer in their homes we have been working with our partners and expanded our home fire safety check (HFSC) to include six key elements of health and wellbeing. These checks have been renamed safe and

wellbeing visits (SWV) to reflect the increased benefits delivered in the assessment and advice. The graph in figure three shows the annual increase in delivery of HFSCs to more than 20,000 in 2015/16. However, due to the introduction of the extended SWV in February 2016, the overall number of HFSCs reduced slightly during 2016/17 to allow for the increased wellbeing element of the assessment.

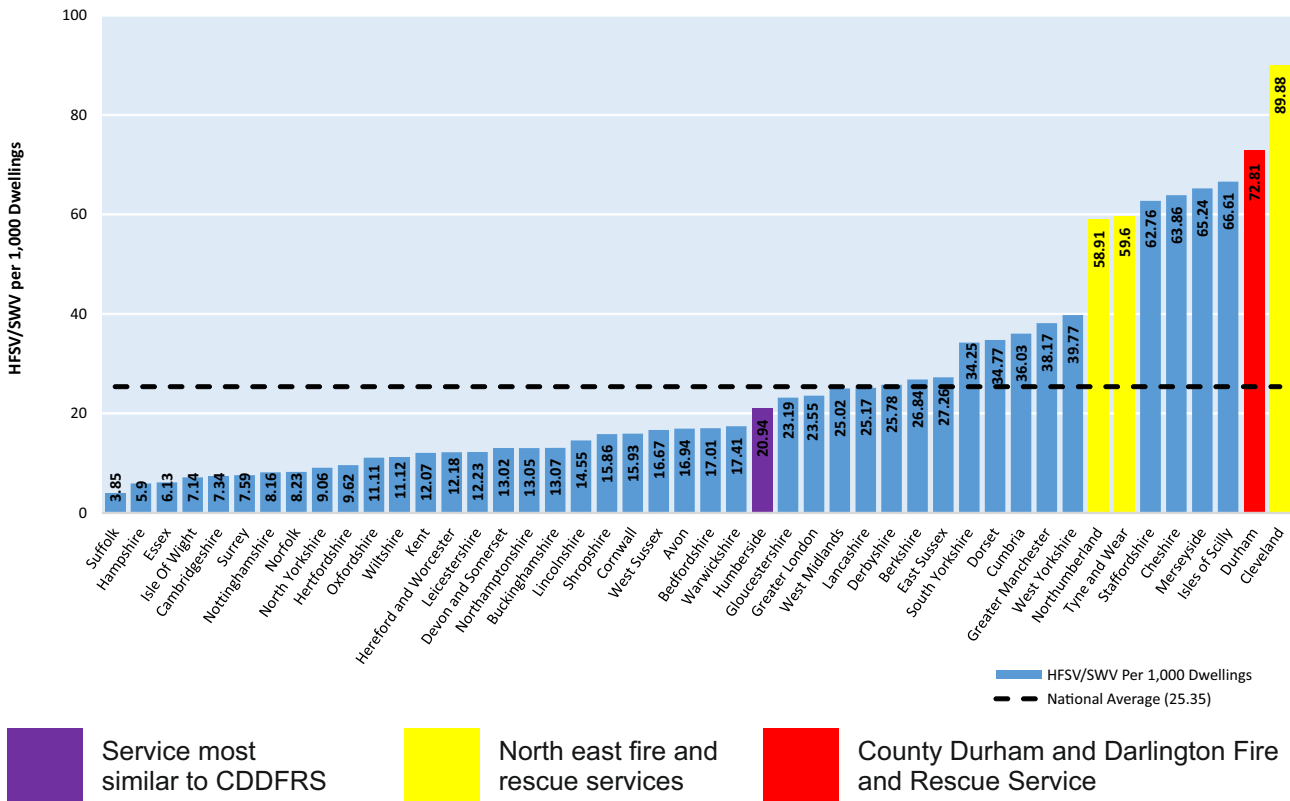


**Figure three - Home fire safety checks/safe and wellbeing visits (2010/11 - 2015/16) - CDDFRS only**



Nationally CDDFRS is the second best performing Service in the country with regard to home fire safety checks/safe and wellbeing visits. Figure four shows the national comparison.

**Figure four - Home fire safety visits/safe and wellbeing visits per 1,000 dwellings by fire and rescue authority 2015/16**



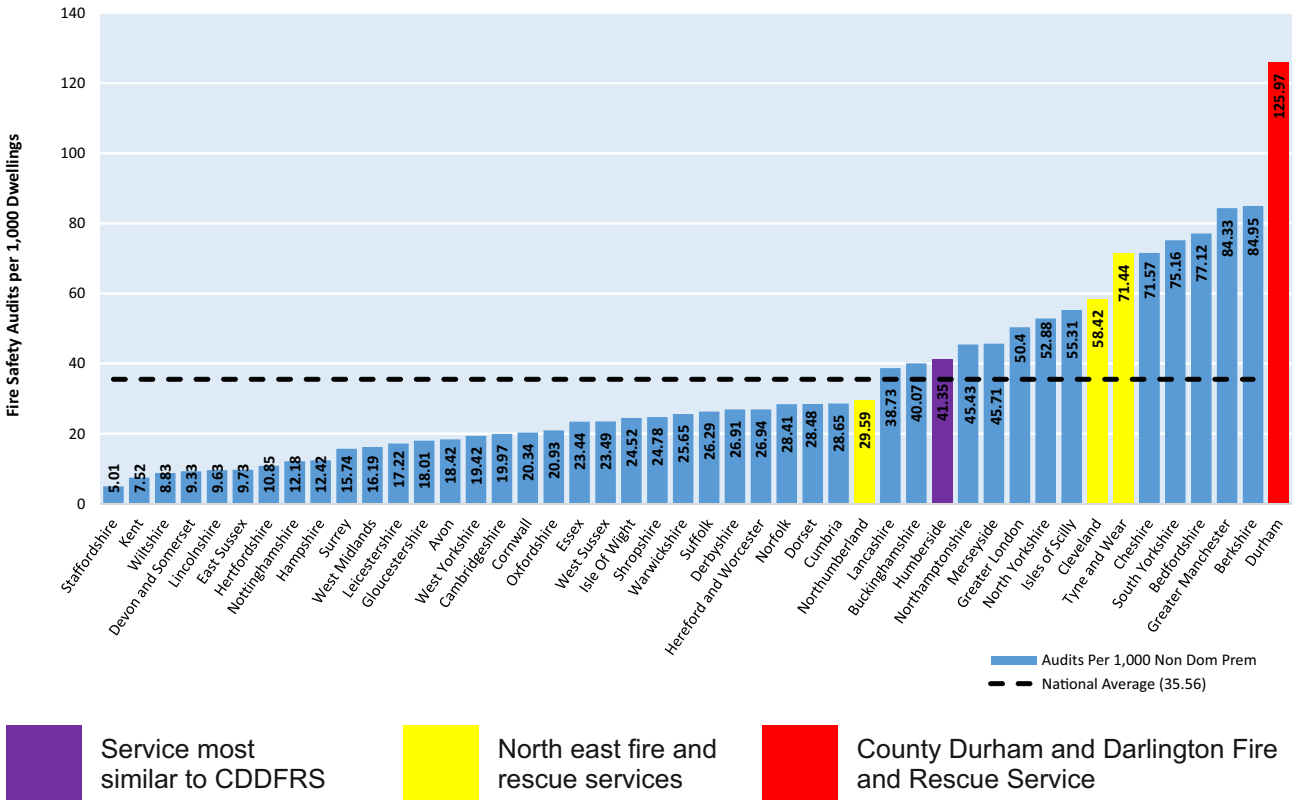
National statistics show that CDDFRS is currently the best performing service in the country with regard to the number of fire safety audits carried out on non-domestic properties (see figure five). This achievement reflects the Service's extensive work with businesses and organisations to help keep people safe at work or when visiting a workplace such as a hotel or shop. CDDFRS does this by offering fire safety advice to

businesses and conducting an audit programme on workplace fire safety risk assessments.

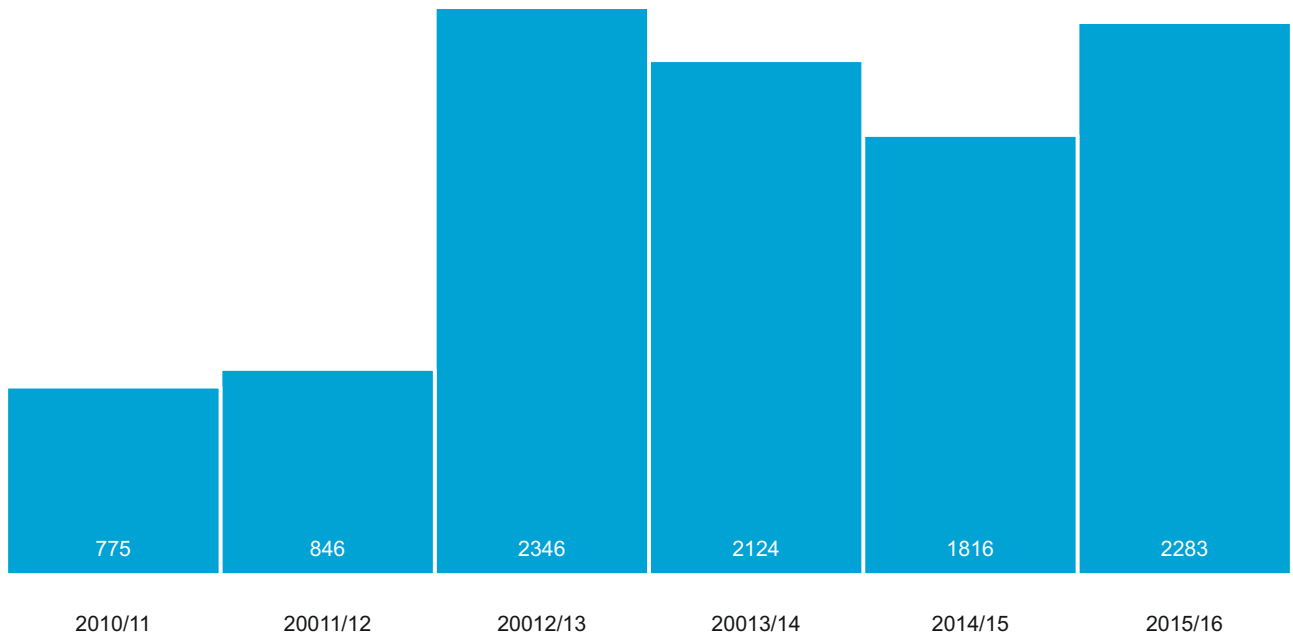
During 2015/16 there was a 16% decrease in the number of fires in non-domestic premises and a 5% reduction in false alarms caused by automatic fire detection apparatus when compared to the previous year. Figure six shows the increase in workplace fire safety audits during the same period.



**Figure five – Fire safety audits per 1,000 non domestic premises by fire and rescue authority 2015/16**



**Figure six – Fire safety audits non domestic properties (2010/11 – 2015/16) CDDFRS only**





## The financial outlook

In the face of an ongoing reduction in government funding, we remain committed to protecting front line services to the public ensuring that there is no increase in risk and no change to emergency response standards.

This commitment is evident in our recruitment strategy, which is designed to put viable succession plans in place to ensure the future resilience of CDDFRS. There are currently four strands to the recruitment strategy:

- Retained (part-time) firefighters to whole-time (full-time) transfers;
- Firefighters transferring into CDDFRS from other Services;
- Recruitment from the general public; and
- New firefighter apprenticeships.

Our funding from central government has reduced by almost £6m since 2010. In spite of the challenging financial circumstances, we have been successful in achieving savings through our service transformation programme which has enabled us to balance the budget while at the same time protecting front line services.

The Fire Authority has agreed to accept the government's offer of a four year funding settlement covering the period 2016/17 to 2019/20, however this will still result in a significant reduction in government funding (19%) over the medium term. The medium term financial plan, set out in the table below, outlines our financial position over the next four years:

### Medium term financial plan

	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>28.609</b>	<b>28.183</b>	<b>28.774</b>	<b>29.062</b>
Total government funding	10.945	9.676	9.134	8.884
Local non domestic rates	1.479	1.508	1.552	1.602
Council tax	15.861	16.254	16.646	17.047
Surplus on collection fund	0.324	0	0	0
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>28.609</b>	<b>27.438</b>	<b>27.332</b>	<b>27.533</b>
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-0.745</b>	<b>-1.442</b>	<b>-1.529</b>





As part of the medium term financial plan we have assumed that council tax increases by 1.9% each year; under current regulations this is the maximum increase permitted before a local referendum would be required to seek approval from residents.

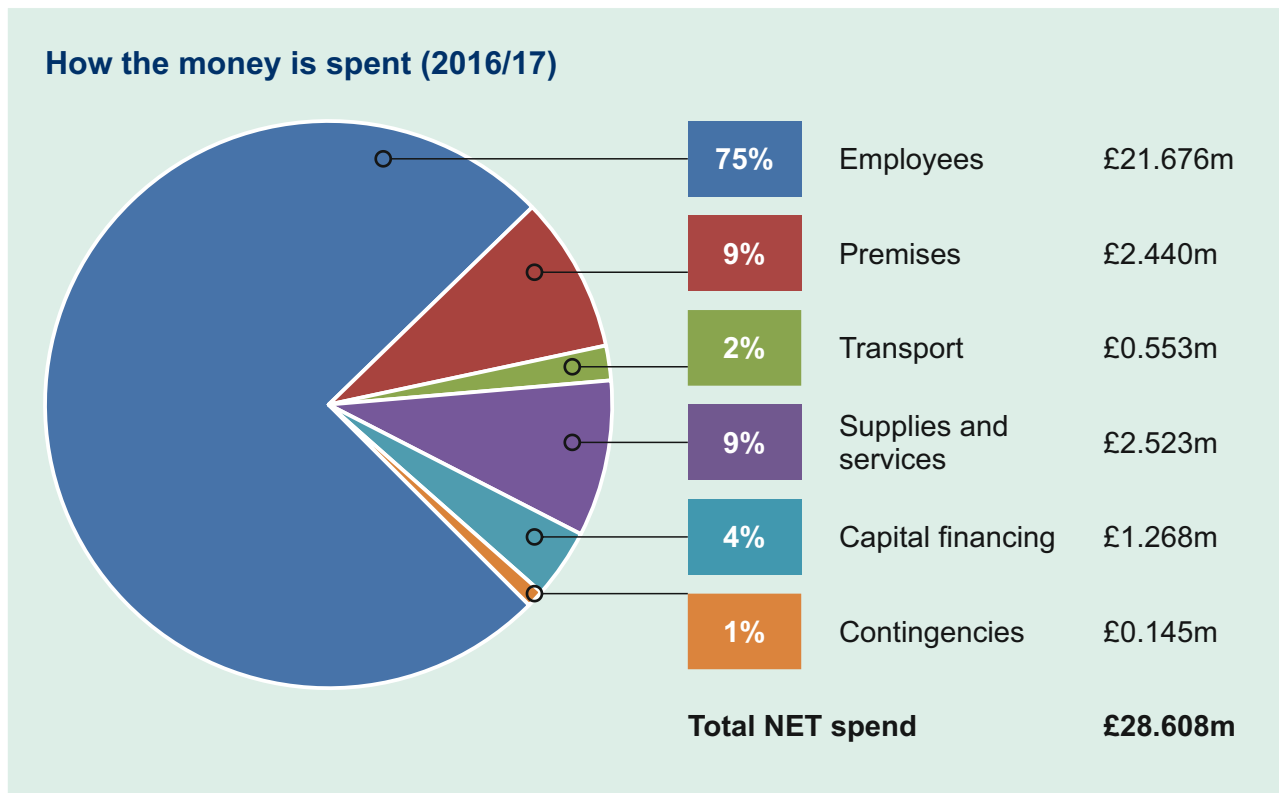
In order to balance the budget we still need to find a further £1.5m of savings. Having implemented the vast majority of cost savings available to us, to run a lean and efficient service, we are now looking at other measures which could help to generate income and/or reduce costs without affecting our frontline fire appliances, stations and community safety activities.

We have a strong track record of collaboration with partners, which has secured government funding to progress a number of high profile collaborative projects including:

- The building of the first quad station in the country in Barnard Castle which, when complete, will provide a joint facility for the fire, police, ambulance and mountain rescue services.
- A joint facility with Durham Police at our Belmont Training Centre for incident command training.
- The provision of community safety tri-responders in Stanhope where staff work for the fire, police and ambulance services according to demand.

Collaborative projects and schemes with other public sector organisations are a key consideration as reflected in our consultation questions. This approach also fits into the government's agenda to enable 'closer working between the emergency services'.

Based on our current finances, this is how the total (net) £28.608m of our funding is spent:



As a marker, households paying council tax at band D level pay £1.84 per week towards the fire and rescue service, a total of £95.76 per year.



## You said, we did

In last year's IRMP consultation we asked for your opinions in relation to five aspects of our developing strategy. Here is an update on the work carried out in each of the five areas since gaining approval through the consultation process.

**The strategic review of fire control** has resulted in shift systems to provide more efficient cover within the fire control team. This review was conducted in cooperation with the fire control team and the Fire Brigades Union. The revised shift systems will come into operation in January 2017.

**Extending the role of firefighters to assist public health services** has resulted in the development of our safe and wellbeing visits. These visits involve the provision of information and advice and cover six key areas of health intervention services: dementia, slips trips and falls, smoking cessation, alcohol awareness, loneliness and isolation and winter warmth. Each of these factors are often directly involved in fire related incidents.

**Expansion of the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) scheme.** The EMR trial has been in operation across Consett, Seaham,

Darlington and Stanhope. As of 31 October CDDFRS EMR crews had responded to 2684 incidents as part of the trial and lives have been saved. The trial was scheduled to end in June but thanks to interim funding from the Local Accident and Emergency Delivery Board it will now continue to the end of February 2017.

**Exploring further collaboration through support services, our estates and fire stations.** The service has established a Joint Strategic Collaboration Board together with Durham Constabulary and Durham Police and Crime Commissioner. The board has identified a range of areas where the possibility of collaboration could be explored. These areas include: use of buildings, back up support for command and control teams, shared IT networks and training.

**Extending the Young Firefighters' Association (YFA) and Fire Cadets' schemes.** In addition to the established groups running at Consett, Darlington, High Handenhold and Seaham Fire Stations, four new schemes have been added in the past year. Young people can now attend groups at Bishop Auckland, Crook, Durham and Spennymoor Fire Stations.



Pictured: Fire Cadets taking a break from demonstrating their skills to guests at Darlington Fire Station.



## Consultation questions

### Seeking your views on our future plans

#### 1. Emergency medical response (EMR)

**Based on the outcomes of the EMR trial, should we continue this work with North East Ambulance Service provided it supports our core fire and rescue service strategic priorities?**

The EMR trial involves fire and rescue services across the region joining forces with North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) to respond to specific types of medical emergency where they can be at the scene before an ambulance arrives.

The trial began in January 2016 and, following an extension to the original six month scheme, it will now continue until the end of February 2017.

In the first six months of the EMR trial fire crews across the region attended a total of 2,904 incidents as a result of 999 calls: 1,811 in Durham and Darlington, 136 in Northumberland, 395 in Tyne and Wear and 562 in Cleveland.

In County Durham and Darlington, Consett, Darlington and Seaham Fire Stations have been taking part in this trial. Two tri-responders, who cover fire, police and

ambulance service incidents can also respond to EMR calls from Stanhope Fire Station.

Suitably trained firefighters from these stations have been co-responding alongside the ambulance service to patients identified by NEAS control operators as having potentially life threatening conditions.

The improved response to patients where CDDFRS crews have initiated life saving intervention prior to the arrival of an ambulance has clearly saved lives.

The Fire and Rescue Service does not receive core funding to provide response to medical emergencies, however it has been keen to work more collaboratively with the ambulance service in order to help save lives. The trial is currently part of a review of the terms and conditions of firefighters by the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, looking at the current and future demands on the service and profession.

Any continuation of this collaboration would be dependent on a full consultation with fire service crews and the Fire Brigades Union as well as detailed discussions with NEAS.



Pictured: Nick Leeming (centre), who suffered a cardiac arrest, was attended by a crew from CDDFRS Darlington blue watch followed by North East Ambulance Service in an Emergency Medical Response rescue earlier this year.





## 2. Further collaboration with health services

### Would you support us in exploring further collaboration with health services in the future?

Linked but separate to our emergency medical response (EMR) trial is the work that has been done this year as part of our new safe and wellbeing scheme.

Since 15 February 2016, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) had carried out 12,420 Safe and Wellbeing Visits (SWVs) and made 1,621 referrals to partner agencies as of 31 October. The new visits form part of our community safety work and replace the home fire safety checks, which the Service had run successfully for the past ten years.

SWVs continue to include advice to drive down the incidents of fire in the home but they are also designed to provide information and practical help to improve health and quality of

life through referrals to partner agencies, where appropriate. This could be preventing slips, trips and falls, which are a big risk for elderly people in their homes; providing details about access to schemes to heat homes or health initiatives such as flu jabs. We can also give information about smoking cessation and alcohol consumption and support those affected by dementia as well as loneliness and isolation.

We are working closely with local authorities, our partners in health, housing providers and organisations such as Age UK Darlington, Age UK County Durham, the Alzheimer's Society and the Royal British Legion, to provide the referrals and expertise, should people take up the initial offers of support and advice.

Our firefighters and community safety teams have taken part in training to equip them with the skills to carry out this new element of their roles.

## 3. Sharing High Handenhold Fire Station with Durham Police

### Do you agree that we should share High Handenhold Fire Station with Durham Police?

Sharing fire stations with other emergency services allows CDDFRS to reduce costs, improve facilities and provide savings for both organisations. There are also a range of operational benefits to both organisations such as shared intelligence and joint training opportunities.

A similar arrangement has been in place in Newton Aycliffe for the past two years where Durham Police share the fire station with fire crews. This allowed the former police station near to the fire station to close, saving costs and freeing up land for sale. It has also helped to maintain a police presence in the area, fostered partnership working between both services and generated income for the fire service to go towards the running costs of the building.









## What to do now / how to respond?

This consultation runs until **Monday 20 February** and we are keen to canvas as many views as possible. Please take part in our survey via the following address [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/consultation2017-18/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/consultation2017-18/)

Should you require a hard copy of the survey to complete and return to us please phone: 0845 3058383 or email [ServiceHQ@ddfired.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceHQ@ddfired.gov.uk)

This publication is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.

More information about the work and performance of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority is available via the website [www.ddfired.gov.uk](http://www.ddfired.gov.uk)