



# Estates Strategy

## 2020 - 2023



County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Service

**Safest People, Safest Places**

## Estates Strategy

### 1. Foreword

The Estates strategy defines how the provision and maintenance of efficient and effective buildings and facilities will support County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service in achieving the vision to have the Safest People, Safest Places.

The Services' strategic priorities are detailed in our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which explains CDDFRS' vision of "Safest People, Safest Places" and how we plan to achieve this. The Estates Strategy is part of the suite of documents which support the delivery of the IRMP and explains the changes that will be taking place across our estate to support the achievement of our vision.

The Estates Strategy covers the areas of Defect reporting, Service desk, Support and triage, Planned Preventative Maintenance and Reactive Maintenance, Legislative Compliance, Site Security, Capital Investment Projects, Energy Efficiency and Environmental Impact Management, Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery Management and furthermore, securing the long-term sustainable future of our Service estates assets.

The Government's fire reform agenda set a clear direction of travel to ensure services are efficient, accountable, transparent and reflective of the diverse communities they serve. This is underpinned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) regime and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England that sets out the overall strategic direction for fire and rescue authorities. Following our first inspection, in aspects of efficiency the Service was graded as 'Good', however, the Service estates strategy represents a significant investment on behalf of the Combined Fire Authority, it is therefore crucial that efficiency remains at the heart of our investments whilst also providing our employees with the most efficient, effective and productive environments within which to work and train to support them in helping to achieve our vision.

We expect the Authority to continue to face a very challenging financial climate going forward, as further cuts to government funding are made. This is exacerbated by restrictions on the amount of income we can raise through council tax and predictions of significant pressures on spending. The lack of further capital investment from Central Government to assist with the sustainability of government estates assets means that all decisions on estates investments from existing budgets must be taken with prudence in mind.

Furthermore, the unexpected nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has seen the Service make significant changes in the way we operate to keep our staff safe whilst continuing to deliver services to our communities. The service has needed to adapt quickly, and estates team has played a key role in assisting our employees to achieve new ways of working by engaging a significant range of modifications to sites and facilities. As we look to the future it's important that we do not pause with the delivery of our People agenda and we must ensure we can find innovative solutions to allow employees to continue to engage with one another and work alongside one another in a safe environment. The next three years are therefore likely to require further innovation and changes to the way we operate and deliver our services and the Estates Strategy will help us achieve this.

## **2. Where are we now?**

In the years leading to the comprehensive spending review the service invested in an estate's capital improvement reserve. This has funded an ambitious programme of estates improvements in recent years despite the continuing austerity.

Key improvements have been seen in significant parts of the estate being replaced by new buildings or with substantial renovations.

More than 50% of service estate buildings are now less than 10 years old. This in itself brings new challenges as it is of great importance that these new assets are protected and maintained to ensure they provide long service life.

In order to service the existing estate, there are numerous contracts in place to ensure specialist repairs and maintenance can be undertaken. These will require continued review for best value. The service now shares more of its estate buildings than ever before with partners from other emergency services, key partners and other agencies who have a similar agenda, aims or values to CDDFRS.

### 3. Key Drivers

The key drivers that have set the direction of this strategy are:

- Operational requirements or matters arising from the IRMP.
- HMICFRS – Ensure we address areas of improvement relating to efficiency, effectiveness and people from our inspection and aim to become an 'outstanding' fire and rescue service.
- Working towards a future of inherent sustainability for the Service estates where Planned Preventative Maintenance derives greater efficiency from investments.
- Balancing the budget within the Medium-Term Financial Plan
- Industry best practice for efficient construction and energy efficiency management, such as following the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM standards).
- Actively seeking and supporting collaboration opportunities with key partners in the interests of efficiency, effectiveness or reducing risk to our communities and staff.
- Our values: Professional, Innovative and Effective describes the service our customers should expect to receive.
- A statutory duty to collaborate with Police and Ambulance as stated in the Policing and Crime Act 2017.



## 4. Our Values and Behaviours

### PROFESSIONAL



### INNOVATIVE



### EFFECTIVE



**PIE** represents our values and describes the service our customers should expect. Tis

The 4C's communicates the behaviours we expect all our people to display at work. Delivery of the 4 C's across the service will lead to an organisation which displays the PIE values and fulfils the organisation aim of 'being the best'



### How We Approach Challenges

Our people should approach challenged with flexibility, enthusiasm, motivation, passion, determination & resilience.

### How We Conduct Ourselves

Our people should conduct themselves in an honest, trustworthy, reliable, accountable, consistent and respectful manner.

### How We Collaborate

Our people should be approachable, supportive, encouraging, inclusive and show that they value their own development and the development of others when collaborating and working with others.

### How We Drive Change Across the Organisation to Make a Difference

Our people should drive change by being creative, resourceful, courageous, original, clear and focused.

## 5. Key Principles

To support the delivery of this strategy we have adopted underpinning principles that we will apply to our improvement objectives.

These are as follows:

We will give our staff the most efficient, effective and productive environments, buildings and facilities to allow our staff to perform, work and train to their very best and help us achieve our aim of being the best fire and rescue service in the UK;

We understand the importance of investing in our service estate assets, not only in the interests of sustainability and efficiency, but also, we believe that this will benefit employees in the environments within which they work;

We trust our people to make decisions and will give them the skills, knowledge and working environment in order to do this effectively;

We will ensure there is a clear route for staff to highlight new improvement and innovation opportunities to our Service;

We will embrace a culture of continuous improvement leading to continuous organisational improvement that translates into better service for the public;

We understand the importance of engaging staff in decisions and will listen and involve our people in our significant capital investment projects, ensuring that we achieve better outcomes and therefore improve our service;

We trust our staff to uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct including openness, honesty and integrity;

As leaders we will lead by example, articulating the values, behaviours and standards expected of the Service outlined in our frameworks.

## 6. Where do we want to be?

We want to be able to clearly demonstrate that we are aiming to 'be the best' fire and rescue service by developing well maintained Service buildings and facilities that meet our operational and support service needs.

Our Estates Strategy sets out a framework to ensure the is not only re-developing our estates premises for today but also creating a function that will see sustainability of the estate for many years thus representing outstanding value for money. The strategy details an ambitious three-year programme, but it should keep Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service at the forefront of the sector in terms of the condition of estate and facilities. The focus is on building upon our prudent investments in recent years, driving efficiency through maintaining those assets well, investing in new estates technologies where appropriate and improving the information and systems that will drive our intelligence for estates management matters.

By 2023, we will be able to demonstrate how we have built upon recent achievements and further strengthen our excellent working relationships with partners such as the police and ambulance services. The strategy provides a framework for creating an estate which is fit for purpose, with good quality buildings of the right size, with the right facilities, in the best locations and provided at optimum cost.

- The service will have undertaken significant capital rebuild or modernisation projects across almost all service estate assets.
- The service intends to introduce a CAFM system to monitor backlog and future maintenance and thus reduce financial risk to the service.
- The service will have undertaken a full review of physical and remote security systems and provision across the entire estates to streamline and future proof systems
- The service will consider social values in all procurement opportunities, such as sustainable materials and local employment
- A continual and increasing proportion of the value of general repairs and maintenance will be undertaken by the service estates team than by other contractors.
- Further aspects of service estate will be shared with partners or other suitable agencies.
- Outstanding major contracts will have been reviewed and re-tendered.

## **7. How do we get there, key objectives?**

### **Capital Improvement**

Significant improvements to the Service estate will continue throughout 2020 to 2023. Prudent capital investment is at the heart of this strategy to achieve a sustainable future estate.

In the coming 3 years we will conclude the rebuilding of Darlington fire station, providing a modern, efficient facility serving the Borough of Darlington and beyond. We will design and build an extension to Service Training Centre. This is to incorporate state-of-the-art Breathing Apparatus wash facilities to mitigate increasing concerns relating to carbonaceous contaminants. The Estates team will also design and implement a significant re-modernisation project for Sedgefield Fire Station, accommodation will be improved to incorporate facilities that are more suited to a modern fire station and will also incorporate facilities to allow collaboration with North East Ambulance Service (NEAS).

### **Improve Estates Management Systems**

Improved planning and access to information is required to better facilitate the management of backlog maintenance and the management of Planned Preventative Maintenance. The Service will look to introduce an appropriate Computer Aided Facilities Management (CAFM) system to monitor, backlog and future maintenance and thus reduce financial risk to the Authority.

### **Estates Collaboration**

There are clear advantages in improving operational effectiveness, generating income and releasing efficiencies to protect the front line by working with willing partners. We will constantly review estates capacity and consider collaboration opportunities that present mutual benefits.

In the near-term projects, we will be working closely with NEAS to incorporate shared accommodation in both Darlington and Sedgefield Fire Stations.

### **Contract Management**

To ensure the Service constantly secures value for money services a range of contracts will be renewed over the term of this strategy.

The Service will complete the TUPE transfer of staff within the catering contract. This will reduce service management costs associated with this contract.

A review will be undertaken on service-wide security systems and services with a view to potentially procure more effective newer technology equipment.

A review of the services grounds maintenance requirements will be undertaken.



## 8. Measuring Progress

We will monitor progress of this strategy in the following ways:



### **Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)**

We will develop a suite of appropriate Key Performance Indicators to help measure the progress of this strategy.



### **Reporting Progress**

Scrutiny of progress against the strategy will be undertaken by the Performance and Programme Board (PPB) who will receive regular reports from the Head of People and Organisational Development, in their role as strategic lead for People.



### **Measuring Perceptions/ Sense Checking**

We will regularly ask for feedback from our staff to inform us of our progress on elements with the People Strategy through our engagement sessions, range of leadership forums and through meetings with our representative bodies. Their opinions and suggestions will be used to influence improvement.



### **Keeping it current**

We will provide a progress report to the relevant committees and update the action plan annually to ensure it remains current.

