

Suffolk
Fire and Rescue Service



Suffolk
County Council

Service Plan 2015 - 2018

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www.suffolk.gov.uk/emergency-and-rescue

Introduction

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has a strong reputation locally, regionally and nationally for keeping costs low and performance high. We are one of the most cost-efficient fire and rescue services in the country and have achieved this by continuously improving what we do and how we do it.

We have worked hard to understand how we can best continue to deliver effective services rebalancing resources to reflect local risk and the changing demand for our service.

Our work as a Service contributes directly to Suffolk County Council's vision reflects our focus on seven priorities and the following key themes:

1. Service redesign - helping shape the future of our Service
2. On-call improvement – maximising the availability of our on-call fire stations and firefighters
3. Blue-light collaboration – expanding shared use of stations and working together with blue-light partners to become even more efficient.

The Government's approach to dealing with national debt has meant a significant reduction in funding for local government. Inevitably, this means the transformation Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has undertaken in recent years will continue, but always with careful consideration of the impact of proposed changes for our people and Suffolk's communities.

Our challenge is to ensure the services we provide are maintained and, where necessary, improved so we are able to meet the changing needs of Suffolk's communities.

We must do this in a way that ensures our people have the support, equipment and training they need to continue to be effective and operate safely.

We fully recognise the importance of our prevention and protection work, supporting young people to make better life-choices, older and vulnerable people to live independently in their homes, and develop and support prevention initiatives which help raise young people's attainment levels.

If you would like more details about our Service or to download a copy of this document please visit our website;

www.suffolk.gov.uk/emergency-and-rescue



Cllr Matthew Hicks
Cabinet Member for
Environment and
Public Protection



Mark Hardingham
Chief Fire Officer

Aspire

In making our plans, agreeing priorities and delivering our services, it is important that our people have the knowledge and skills to do their jobs safely and effectively. It is also vital that we consider how we act, present ourselves, treat each other, lead our teams and manage our performance.

Our behaviours and attitudes form a big part of how successful we are as an organisation and we have committed to using the County Council's ASPIRE values framework to help us develop our culture.

A – Achieve: “We are the best we can be”

S – Support: “We work as one team”

P – Pride: “We take pride in and are proud of what we do”

I – Inspire: “We model the ASPIRE values”

R – Respect: “We give and earn respect”

E – Empower: “We empower, encourage and motivate people”



‘We work as one team’

Our Role

Our role as a service is to deliver Prevention, Protection and Emergency Response Services:

Prevention

We promote community safety and fire prevention and target our efforts at those we consider to be most at risk in Suffolk which includes older people, those with limited mobility, families with young children and young drivers.

We work closely with partners across Suffolk to support people, families and communities to live healthier, safer lives and raise attainment levels to secure prosperous and successful futures for people.

The work we do to promote community and fire safety contributes significantly to the overall reduction in fire and road deaths and injuries in Suffolk and also plays a key role in helping keep Suffolk safe.

Protection

Our statutory duty is to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations in commercial, industrial and business premises in line with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

We help ensure that people are safe from fire when at work or in public buildings and recognise that we can support Suffolk's businesses to develop and grow.

Response

We provide 999 emergency services 24 hours a day, seven days a week for people who live, work in and visit Suffolk.

We receive approximately 7,000 999 calls each year and respond to around 5,000 emergencies. These include fires, road traffic collisions, industrial accidents, rescues, chemical incidents, flooding and water rescues.

Increasingly, we work locally, regionally and nationally with other blue-light services, and our Local Resilience Forum, planning for larger emergencies.

‘Our ambition is to make Suffolk a place where people live safe and fulfilling lives’

Suffolk and our Service

Suffolk has an area of 3,798sq km and a population of 728,163 (2011 Census).

We have seen a 40% reduction in our 999 calls since 2004. We deal with a wide variety of emergencies and plan to respond to foreseeable risks. Our risk management and response arrangements can be found in our 2014/17 [Integrated Risk Management Plan](#). We currently employ 701 people; 208 full-time and 435 on-call firefighters, and 58 support staff. We are supported by 26 volunteers.

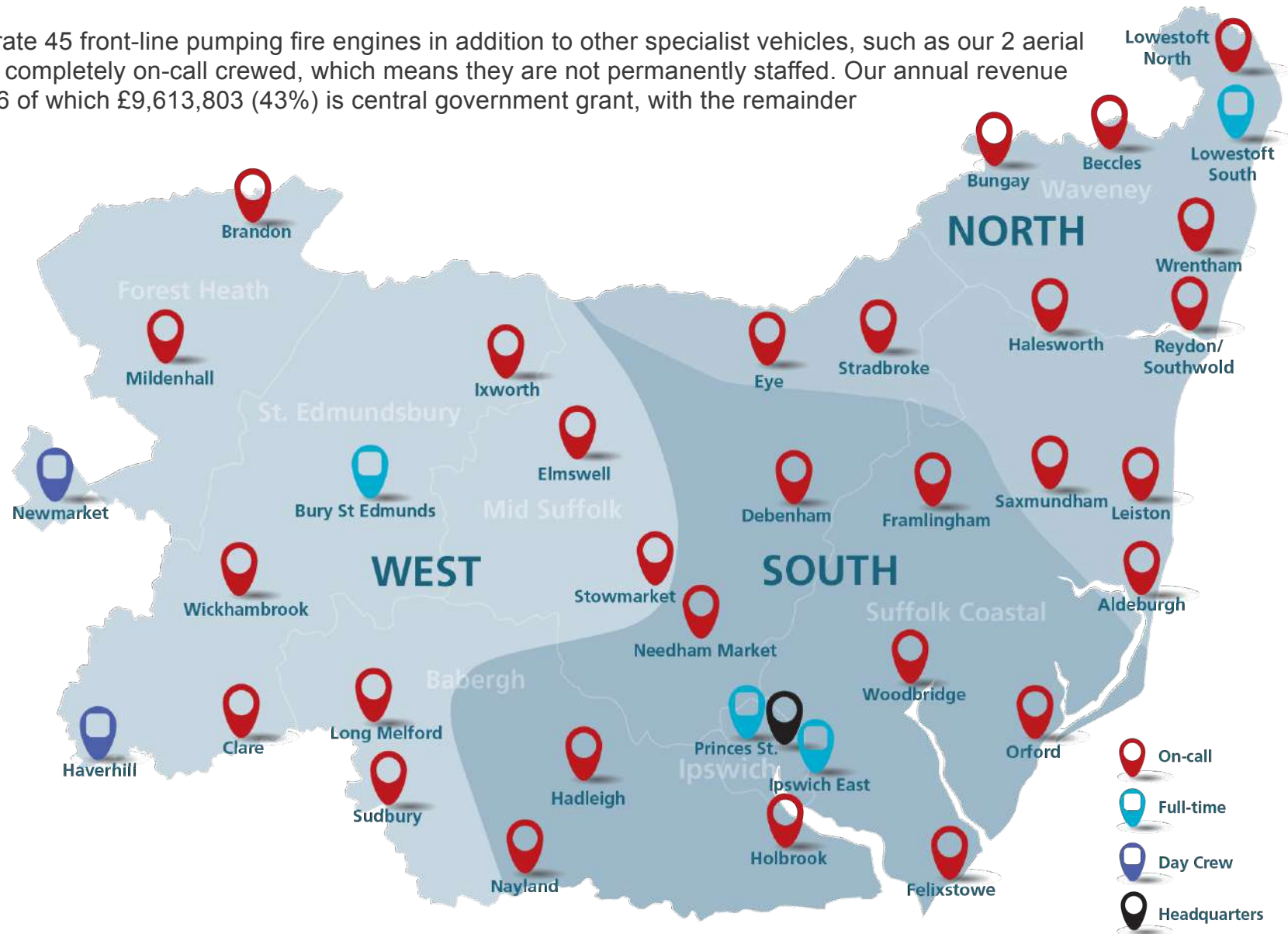
We have 35 fire stations and operate 45 front-line pumping fire engines in addition to other specialist vehicles, such as our 2 aerial appliances. 29 of our stations are completely on-call crewed, which means they are not permanently staffed. Our annual revenue budget for 2015/16 is £22,280,596 of which £9,613,803 (43%) is central government grant, with the remainder raised through local council tax.

Suffolk Facts

Over a third of Suffolk's 728,000 population live in Ipswich, Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds.

The age profile is likely to change between 2011 and 2021, with more children under 15, less people aged between 15 and 27, and more over 50s.

The greatest increase is likely to be in the number of older people, with an estimated 23% of the population being over 65.





*‘Responding to emergencies
is central to what we do’*

How do we decide what we do?

The [National Framework](#) for the Fire and Rescue Service in England sets out Government’s expectations for fire and rescue authorities, which are:

1. Identify and assess foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks in their areas, making provision for prevention activities and responding to incidents appropriately
2. Work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service
3. Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.
4. Have in place a process of fitness assessment and development to ensure that operational personnel can maintain their fitness

Suffolk County Council’s priorities are:

1. Raise educational attainment and skill levels
2. Support the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to increase economic growth.
3. Maintain roads and develop Suffolk’s infrastructure
4. Support those most vulnerable in our communities
5. Empower local communities

These, together with the Service’s statutory responsibilities, shape how Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service provides services to local communities.

Our purpose and ambition

Our purpose is 'to provide efficient fire and rescue services that are cost-effective, meet all relevant legislative requirements and which are delivered by safe, professional and well-trained people. By working together, we can help improve the quality of life for the people of Suffolk.'

It is our ambition to make Suffolk 'a place where people live safe and fulfilling lives'. This means that deaths and injuries from fires and road traffic collisions are at the lowest level possible; levels of fire-related crime are low; businesses are aware of their responsibilities regarding fire safety and people feel safe in their own homes. It means Suffolk will be a place where fire stations, firefighters and the outstanding reputation of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is used to support and enable communities to develop the capacity and ability to improve their quality of life.

Our performance

We regularly monitor our performance using a range of measures that cover key aspects of the Service. Areas for improvement are highlighted using feedback from the public, our staff, internal reviews or through peer-challenge and audit. This influences and informs our priorities and work.

Assurance of our performance is provided through our annual Statement of Assurance, which is available, together with our Yearly Performance Outturn Report, on our webpage:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/emergency-and-rescue>

Our Statement and Outturn for 2014/15 will be published in the Autumn of 2015.



Equalities and inclusion

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service plays an important role in supporting Suffolk County Council's equality objectives. Our current equality priorities are:

1. To support firefighter recruitment with positive outreach events and strive to encourage more successful applications from under-represented groups
2. To encourage people from under-represented groups to become Community Fire Safety Volunteers to help us to raise awareness of fire safety within local communities
3. To improve access to our fire stations and use these to help us, our partners and other agencies to engage and support vulnerable people. This will include carrying out access audits of our fire stations in partnership with the County Council's staff groups, continuing our work to fit new fire station door access systems and providing better welfare facilities on stations
4. To share more fire stations with our blue-light partners where this is advantageous and supports the continuation of access to services for local people
5. To increase our expertise and the confidence of our people in undertaking Equality Impact Assessments to ensure changes to policies are considered fully. We will include equalities and inclusion training within all staff development programmes.



*'We model the **ASPIRE** Values'*



Our priorities

Emergency response

We will maintain resilient emergency response arrangements to ensure we have the right fire stations, people, fire engines and equipment in the right places and at the right times to meet our statutory and discretionary responsibilities.

Health and safety

Firefighting is inherently risky – we will maintain and improve our arrangements for meeting our statutory health and safety responsibilities, reducing the number and seriousness of accidents to our people and reduce levels of sickness absence further by focusing on improving our health and safety culture.

999 call management and incident support

We will continue our collaboration with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to deliver effective, efficient and resilient 999 emergency control services.

Training and development

We will use our training and development facilities at our Wattisham Training Centre to ensure our Firefighters are amongst the best trained in the UK and that they continue to be safe, professional and competent.

Community risk reduction

We will work with stakeholders, partners and communities to reduce the risk of death and injury to people and damage to property and the environment through effective prevention, protection and response activities.

Corporate health

We will seek to continuously improve our leadership, capacity, communications, organisational culture, use of resources and business processes to help us meet community expectations. We will also promote equality, inclusion and fairness in all that we do.

We will achieve these aims within the financial constraints that impact on all public services, focusing on extending collaboration and partnership working with other blue-light services to become even more efficient.

Community capacity

We will work with Suffolk's communities and our partners to ensure that the most vulnerable people are able to help themselves, or be provided with help, to maintain and improve their safety and quality of life.



'We are the best we can be'

What we achieved in 2014 - 2015

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme

This Government-led initiative will replace the existing emergency services Airwave radio system with a new national mobile communications service which is based on the 4G and broadband network. We will continue to plan and prepare for a future move to the new system in 2017/18.

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

We have, and continue to, work closely with other emergency services in Suffolk, regionally and nationally to improve the way in which we plan, respond to, and operate together at emergencies. JESIP has provided a standard way of communicating, sharing information, making decisions and learning from each other and we have worked hard to ensure we are using these agreed principles in Suffolk.

On-call Firefighter Improvement Programme

We started a substantial programme of work to improve how we support our on-call firefighters. This will help us maximise on-call fire engine and firefighter availability across the county and will lead to increases in firefighter numbers on some key on-call fire stations.

Blue light collaboration

We worked closely with other blue-light partners, including the Police and the East of England Ambulance Service, to make the best use of our resources. We now share five fire stations with Suffolk Police and three with the Ambulance Service.

We were successful in securing £4.93m government grant funding for increasing the number of shared fire, Police and Ambulance stations in Suffolk and have developed a joint Fire and Police Cadet Scheme. We also put in place joint Incident Command assessments for senior officers in partnership with Essex and Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services. We have created a Fire Special Operations Team with blue-light partners in Norfolk and Suffolk, to provide a timely multi-agency response to terrorist firearms-related incidents.

Managerial review

We completed a review of our uniformed middle and senior management structure and realigned roles and responsibilities, saving money and also providing support at the levels where this was most needed.



'We take pride in what we do'

Youth engagement and prevention

We increased the number of School Fire Liaison Officers in Suffolk to eight and we are now working alongside Public Health to further expand the number of officer's fulfilling this important role. Our links with Suffolk's schools were strengthened through greater collaboration and we are now better targeting our initiatives to supporting the County Council's Raising the Bar Programme.

Other prevention activities supported were:

1. Fireflies –We worked with students from two schools who provided cycling patrols of areas in Ipswich which have suffered anti-social fires. The students developed bike safety and other skills result and have worked very closely with local Police and Firefighters
2. Juvenile Fire-Setter Advise Scheme – We continued to work with young people who displayed a fascination with, or who actually, set fires
3. Crucial Crew – We continued to provide lifesaving home and personal safety advice around the county, engaging with students in year 5/6 utilising our Fire Experience Unit
4. Road safety awareness education – We delivered a number of initiatives for young people to help reduce the number killed or seriously injured on Suffolk's roads. This included working with young drivers and motorcyclists
5. Firefighting Fit-and-Healthy – We worked with young people over a number of weeks to achieve a healthier lifestyle through two key areas - nutritional awareness and the importance of leading a more active lifestyle
6. FireBike - We worked with the Copdock Motorcycle Club to provide a motorbike which we now use to provide road safety advice to motorcyclists in Suffolk. We do this in partnership with our Police and County Council road-safety colleagues.

Procuring new vehicles and equipment

We continued to invest in our emergency response capability, further improving our emergency vehicles and reducing our fleet size to make this more efficient. We procured new equipment and delivered training on this to ensure our firefighters are effective and safe.

In the last period we replaced two new water carrier vehicles; six new fire engines, new thermal image cameras and automatic defibrillators. We also introduced positive pressure ventilation units and reathing apparatus anti-entanglement equipment which makes firefighters safer when fighting-fires in buildings.



'Our Prevention and Protection work keeps people safe'

Our plans for 2015 - 2018

On-call Improvement programme

The purpose of our on-call improvement programme is to maximise the availability of our on-call firefighters and fire engines across Suffolk. The activities associated with the programme relate to:

1. Recruitment, development and retention of on-call firefighters
2. Reviewing terms and conditions of employment of our on-call firefighters, and potentially introducing new contracts which are more flexible
3. Reviewing the operational requirements relating to on-call firefighters
4. Improving station IT equipment including computers and Wi-Fi.

Blue light collaboration

We will continue to increase the number of shared fire, police and ambulance stations in Suffolk and identify other areas where we may be able to work more closely together. This will include considering the scope for the future sharing of property in, but not limited to:

1. Saxmundham
2. Felixstowe
3. Stowmarket
4. Mildenhall
5. Beccles
6. Ipswich

Service redesign programme

We continue to face significant reductions in government grant funding. It is important that we continue to plan for this and consider what our Service may need to look like in the future so we can continue to deliver effective and resilient services.

Our programme of work will examine ideas and options which we will develop with the help of key stakeholders, including trade unions, before formal proposals and recommendations are developed.

'We give and earn respect'



Sizewell C – consultation exercise

We will ensure that we respond effectively to the Sizewell C Stage 2 consultation process which is expected to commence in 2015 or early 2016.

Joint Fire and Police cadet scheme

We will continue to develop our joint Fire and Police Cadet Scheme aimed at young people aged 13-18 years. We will seek to accredit this using a BTEC qualification, offering recognised credits towards further education courses.

Review of our prevention function

A review undertaken in 2014/15 resulted in identifying opportunities to work more collaboratively with the Police and County Council community safety teams and scope to create a more single efficient team. The first stage of our work will be to co-locate our teams to create a more joined-up and co-ordinated approach.

New firefighting equipment and techniques

We will continue to invest in our fire engines, operational equipment and our firefighters personal protective equipment. This will help support the delivery of effective services to our communities and keep our firefighters safe. Our work will include:

1. Replacing our off-road and Command Support Vehicles so that we can respond effectively to incidents in rural areas those involving water and flooding and also better manage and communicate at emergencies
2. Reviewing our fire engines and exploring new vehicle types and fire-fighting equipment where this may help us to become more efficient and effective
3. Look at our communications equipment so that firefighters can operate even more safely at emergencies, particularly when using breathing apparatus, and vehicle mounted Mobile Data Terminals.



National Operational Guidance (NOG) and incident command


Fire and rescue services are now actively working together to develop a suite of best practice operational policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies. We will support this important work and implement local procedures which reflect national guidance.

Guidance related to how we manage and command emergency incidents will be published in 2015. We will review and adopt this.

ICT and digital improvements

We will seek maximum advantage and new opportunities from the use of ICT, digital services and web-based systems where this helps our people to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently and provides better access for the public to our information and services using the Internet.

We will also continue the programme of improvement to our 999 control systems to ensure these are resilient, becoming even more capable and effective.



‘We empower, encourage and motivate people’

If you would like this information in another format, including audio tape, large print, or another language call 08456 066 067

Comments and questions

If you have any comments or questions about this plan then please do not hesitate to contact us on:

Email: Fire.BusinessSupport@suffolk.gov.uk

Telephone: 01473 260588, 0900-1700 (Mon-Thurs), 0900-1600 (Fri)