DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

OUR MODERNISATION PROGRAMME 2026-29

VERSION 2.0



INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) has delivered significant and sustained reform over recent years, achieving over £15m of recurring savings since combination while continuing to improve operational effectiveness and outcomes for the communities it serves. Most recently through its Response & Savings programme, the Service has demonstrated a clear ability to modernise, innovate and deliver value for money, operating as an efficient fire and rescue service.

Despite this strong track record, the Service now faces a growing financial sustainability challenge driven by constrained funding settlements, increasing costs, and evolving risk and demand. Without greater funding stability, the pace and nature of change will be driven by the need to address an immediate revenue deficit, rather than enabling a more measured and sustainable programme of modernisation.

Our Service Modernisation programme builds upon, and replaces, our previous Resource & Savings programme and represents the next phase of structured transformation to be undertaken by the Service, building on the successful delivery of the previous programmes. It provides a comprehensive and disciplined framework to deliver further efficiencies, strengthen resilience, and support long-term financial sustainability, while continuing to improve how the Service protects its communities.

Central to this programme is a balanced approach that aligns financial sustainability with service effectiveness. Modernisation is not a single initiative, but an ongoing and deliberate process, requiring careful prioritisation, innovation, and strong organisational commitment. It will be delivered in a way that supports our people, strengthens organisational culture, and ensures that prevention, protection and response capabilities remain resilient and adaptable to future risks.

Through disciplined implementation and ongoing review, this programme will act as a cornerstone document, alongside our Community Safety Plan, guiding the Service through a period of financial constraint while continuing its transition to a more efficient, effective and future-ready fire and rescue service.

Strategic Risks

This programme is essential to ensure the Service can effectively respond to and mitigate its strategic risks in a coordinated and sustainable way. It provides a structured approach to managing change, enabling the organisation to improve efficiency, strengthen resilience, and maintain financial and operational sustainability. In doing so, it will ensure that the Service remains adaptable, compliant, and fit for the future, while continuing to deliver effective frontline services.

Strategic Risk	Description
Inability to secure financial sustainability that ensures and maintains effective service provision	The current funding model makes it increasingly difficult to achieve financial sustainability by relying on efficiency savings alone. Significant changes to service delivery are needed to secure further reductions in spending plans to set balanced budgets over the medium term.
Inability to have a robust and financially sustainable on-call duty system to meet the needs of the Service.	The emergency response of the Service is predominantly discharged by on-call firefighters. The Service needs to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage the establishment levels, recruitment, and retention to successfully meet response standards and community needs. Insufficient arrangements could result in a delay, or failure, to meet statutory duties. This would have a negative effect on the communities and open the Authority to scrutiny and adverse financial, legal, political, and reputational impacts.
Inability to protect the Service against cyber threats and attacks	Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Service is required to have robust and resilient business continuity arrangements in place. Information and Communications Technology security arrangements are central to the Service delivering this and maintaining its critical functions. Both nationally and locally there is an increase in threats of cyber-attacks to organisations.
Service Culture	Establishing and developing a positive culture is critical to future success. All staff should be able to be themselves and thrive within the workplace with behaviours aligned to the Code of Ethics.

Programme Objectives

The following objectives will be delivered through a prioritised and sustainable programme of change, aligned to organisational capacity and capability. Delivery will be sequenced to maintain service delivery, support workforce wellbeing, and strengthen organisational resilience, ensuring change is implemented at a pace that is achievable, effective, and does not place undue pressure on teams.

- **Ensure long-term financial sustainability** by maintaining a balanced and resilient financial position, delivering sustainable efficiencies, and aligning resources to operational priorities, risk, and community needs.
- **Deliver a modern, sustainable capital programme** that prioritises investment, maximises value, and ensures our assets, estates, and infrastructure are fit for the future.
- **Optimise our operating model by aligning crewing arrangements to risk, demand, and value for money,** including amalgamating and transitioning selected stations to different crewing models, where this improves service resilience, efficiency and effectiveness, supports the delivery of services that reflect local risk and demand, and reduces risk for greater numbers of the population.
- **Optimise crewing models across wholetime and day-crewed stations to improve efficiency, productivity, resilience, and operational effectiveness,** including the development of more wholetime flexible working systems and duty patterns aligned to service demand and risk.
- **Rationalise, modernise and optimise our estate** by maximising the use of owned assets, reducing reliance on leased accommodation, and ensuring our buildings are strategically aligned to operational risk, response standards, and future service need.
- **Modernise and invest in a future-ready fleet that aligns to operational risk and demand,** maximises efficiency, enhances crew safety and wellbeing, and supports sustainability through innovative vehicle technologies and improved contaminant protection.
- **Deliver a transformational approach to data, risk information** and evidence that enables better-informed decision-making, improves service delivery, strengthens operational effectiveness, and supports a modern, efficient and resilient organisation.
- **Strengthen workforce engagement and wellbeing** by listening to, involving, and supporting our people through modernisation, ensuring change is informed by feedback, communicated openly, and delivered in a way that promotes inclusion.
- **Sustain a high-standards, values-led culture** that consistently promotes positive behaviours, upholds clear expectations, and ensures people are treated with fairness, respect, and dignity across the organisation.

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Fire Service modernisation is essential to ensure we continue to evolve how we work, embracing opportunities to improve our services, make best use of our resources and respond effectively to changing risks, demands and community needs.** As risks, demand and financial pressures continue to change, it is important that we continue to evolve how we operate and deliver our services. We must focus on building a modern, resilient service that is designed for the future, one that is adaptable, evidence-led, and capable of responding effectively to evolving community needs. Modernisation provides the opportunity to redesign how we deliver services, make better use of our resources, and invest in the capabilities required for the next decade and beyond, ensuring we remain effective, efficient, and sustainable.
2. **It is essential that we ensure public money is spent in the most effective, efficient, and transparent way possible.** As a publicly funded service, we have a responsibility to maximise value for money, making informed and evidence-based decisions that prioritise community safety and operational effectiveness. This means continually reviewing how resources are allocated, challenging existing practices, and seeking opportunities to improve efficiency without compromising service delivery. By doing so, we ensure that every penny is used wisely and supports the delivery of high-quality emergency services and maintains public trust and confidence in how we manage and invest public funds.
3. **We will optimise the use of our operational resources to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.** To ensure the Service remains effective, efficient, and aligned with evolving risk and demand, it will continue to review and modernise its operational response model. This includes the ongoing assessment of station locations, crewing models, vehicle types, and appliance deployment, ensuring resources are positioned to deliver maximum impact, particularly in higher-risk and growing communities. This programme will focus on strengthening operational resilience and maintaining robust response standards across as much of the service area as possible, while making best use of available staffing models, including wholetime, on-call, and day-crewed arrangements. This will include consideration of fire station amalgamations where these support a more stable, resilient, and better-aligned service for a wider community. Modern operational response will be underpinned by data-led decision making, enabling the Service to more accurately match resources to risk, improve availability, and reduce duplication and inefficiency, ultimately delivering a safer, more sustainable, and effective response for the communities it serves.
4. **It is essential that the Service maintains the right mix of roles across both operational and corporate functions to ensure it can deliver effectively and sustainably**. Operational and corporate staff are equally vital to the success of the organisation, each playing a distinct but interconnected role in supporting frontline service delivery and organisational capability. The Service will continue to review how corporate functions are delivered, considering the most appropriate approach based on organisational need, capability, resilience, efficiency and value for money. This may include, where appropriate, making use of external expertise, contractors or consultancy support. The Service will continue to ensure that our structure is appropriately balanced, with roles and resources clearly aligned to current and future needs, eliminating duplication and maximising efficiency. By regularly reviewing and evolving our workforce and delivery model, we can ensure that all functions add value, support organisational priorities, and enable the Service to remain resilient, effective and fit for the future.

5. **The Service must ensure that its technology, equipment, vehicles, and estates are modern, fit for purpose.** Our people are at the heart of effective service delivery, and they need the right facilities, technology, equipment and operational resources to do their jobs safely and effectively. These assets should be managed in a coordinated and sustainable way, ensuring they support our workforce, strengthen resilience and provide value for money. Regular review and investment will help ensure that our infrastructure, technology and operational assets continue to meet the needs of our people, reduce risk, support high-quality emergency response and enable firefighters and staff to work safely and effectively. By taking a strategic and integrated approach, we can provide our people with the tools, resources and working environment they need to respond to changing demands and continue delivering safe, effective and responsive services to the communities we serve.

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

A number of ongoing projects from the 2024–2026 Resource & Savings programme will be carried forward into this new programme.

- **Station Reviews (Pending Government Precept decision – Feb 2027)***

  Following the Fire Authority's decision, the Service will progress the Modernisation Programme in line with the funding position and the decisions arising from the review of the eight stations identified for potential closure. Should precept flexibility be secured to bring the Service's funding towards the national average for Band D properties, the eight stations will remain open and the Service will continue to progress the wider Modernisation Programme on that basis. If the additional precept flexibility is not secured, the eight stations would close, and the Service would need to prioritise and sequence the progression of these closures alongside the wider Modernisation Programme. In either scenario, the funding position and associated decisions will have a direct impact on the timing, sequencing and delivery of the Modernisation Programme. Any changes will be implemented in a planned and responsible manner, with appropriate consideration given to our staff, communities and the effective delivery of Service priorities, while ensuring that staff are treated fairly and supported through any resulting transition, with processes managed with care, respect and due diligence.

- **On-call station future estate options (Pending Government Precept decision – Feb 2027) ***

  The future use of the affected sites (within the station reviews) and wider estate will be reviewed in line with the resulting funding position. Where stations remain open, the Service will consider the most appropriate use and investment in those sites as part of the wider Modernisation Programme. Where stations are required to close, the Service will work with local communities and partners to consider options for the future use of the sites, including continued Service use, alternative uses, redevelopment opportunities or, where appropriate, preparation for disposal. This will include securing planning consent where required and ensuring that any decisions represent best value for the public purse.

- **Introduction of rapid response vehicles (RRVs)***

  The Service will explore the introduction of Rapid Response Vehicles at appropriate fire stations, subject to trials and evaluation. This approach will be considered across the Service, aligned to local risk, demand, the specific needs of each station ground and where it is considered operationally beneficial. Trials will help assess the effectiveness of these vehicles in practice,

including their potential to strengthen resilience, improve station availability and support the effective deployment of resources. Any wider introduction will be informed by the outcomes of the trials and subject to appropriate assessment and governance, ensuring that changes support an effective and consistent response to incidents and the needs of our communities.

- **Training Provision Delivery**

  The Training Provision Project is already subject to strategic oversight by the Fire Authority and will now be incorporated within the Modernisation Programme to support coordinated governance and assurance. The project will deliver two Service-owned training centres on existing owned sites, providing modern, fit-for-purpose environments to meet statutory training requirements and support the development and wellbeing of our staff. It will also enable a more sustainable and cost-effective training model by reducing reliance on leased facilities, delivering ongoing revenue savings and improving the quality and consistency of training provision.

*** On-call improvement**

The development and strengthening of the On-Call firefighter model will form a cross-cutting element of the Modernisation Programme and wider strategic projects, rather than being delivered through a single standalone project. A range of projects will consider opportunities to improve On-Call recruitment, retention, availability and sustainability, with relevant projects identified by an ***** within this document. This will include consideration of duty systems, availability standards, contractual arrangements, and the operational requirements of On-Call stations. Projects will also consider work-life balance, flexibility, barriers to participation; all ensuring that On-Call provision continues to support effective and sustainable service delivery.

The following projects form part of this **new Modernisation programme**

- **Estate Rationalisation Plan**

  To ensure the long-term sustainability of the Service, our estate must evolve beyond legacy provisions to meet the changing landscape of risk, demand, and community vulnerability. With financial pressures intensifying, it is essential to maximise the efficient use of existing facilities, reduce reliance on leased properties, and maintain direct control over our estate. This proactive approach will not only support operational resilience and flexibility but also enable the Service to invest strategically in infrastructure that aligns with future needs, ensuring safe, effective, and sustainable service delivery.

- **Second White Fleet Review***

  The Service will undertake a further assessment of the white fleet, building on the initial review and considering the introduction of telematics across vehicles, which now provides valuable data and insight into utilisation, efficiency, and operational need. This enhanced evidence base will support more informed decision-making around fleet size, composition, deployment, and replacement cycles, ensuring resources are appropriately matched to demand and organisational requirements. The review will also consider opportunities to improve safety, reduce environmental impact, and optimise whole-life costs. This data-led approach will strengthen future fleet planning and support a more efficient, sustainable, and effective service.

- **Wholetime Flexible working**

  The Service will undertake a Wholetime Flexible Working project to assess and develop a range of duty systems beyond those currently in place. This will include consideration of models used more widely across the sector, as well as emerging and innovative approaches that better meet

the needs of the Service and our staff. The focus of this work is to modernise wholetime duty systems for the contemporary fire and rescue environment, ensuring time and productivity are optimised, and that arrangements are effective, efficient, and aligned to risk and demand.

- **Demand Led Station Availability Review***

  The Demand Led Station Availability Review will consider local risk, incident demand and community needs to identify the most appropriate availability arrangements for each station. The review will consider when resources are required and how they can best be configured to provide an effective and resilient response, recognising that availability arrangements should reflect the needs of the communities served rather than simply maintaining existing arrangements. The findings will provide an evidence base to inform wider Service planning and will support related reviews, including station optimisation, RRV provision and special appliance requirements.

- **Station Optimisation Programme***

  The Station Optimisation Programme will review and reshape the fire station estate to ensure it is aligned to current and future risk, demand, and service delivery requirements. The programme will consider opportunities for station mergers, amalgamations, relocation, and changes to operational configuration where these improve resilience, efficiency, and coverage for communities. It will take a data-led approach to assessing station performance, response standards, and geographic demand, alongside consideration of estate utilisation and long-term sustainability. The aim is to create a more coherent and effective station network that strengthens operational capability, supports modern ways of working, and ensures resources are positioned to deliver the best possible outcomes for public safety.

- **Wider Second Aways Review***

  The Service will undertake a wider second appliance review, building on the previous phase which removed lower-utilisation fire engines from stations with multiple appliances. This next stage will focus on on-call stations where second appliances remain in place, assessing whether they continue to be required or whether alternative arrangements would provide greater operational benefit. The review will be informed by an analysis of risk, incident demand, appliance availability, and overall station resilience, ensuring resources are appropriately aligned to need. The aim is to ensure that appliance provision is efficient, effective, and sustainable, while maintaining appropriate levels of service to communities.

- **Special Appliance Review***

  The Special Appliance Review will continue, taking a comprehensive look at specialist vehicles across the organisation, including wildfire units, technical rescue appliances, water first responder assets, Unimogs, and other capabilities required to meet current and emerging risks. This phase will assess existing provision, utilisation, distribution, and operational effectiveness, alongside whether current numbers and types of vehicles remain appropriate and where they are best located. It will also consider future requirements to ensure the Service is prepared for evolving risk and demand. The overarching aim is to develop a more coherent, efficient, and resilient specialist fleet that strengthens operational response and supports a modern fire and rescue service.

A number of important **strategic projects** will also be undertaken across the Service, that sit outside of this Modernisation programme. These will be managed through the Service's established strategic project governance framework. The strategic projects identified below have clear interdependencies with this

modernisation programme and will therefore receive corporate oversight, through the Strategic Leadership Team (along with all strategic level projects), to ensure alignment, coordination, and effective delivery across all related areas of work. These are:

- **Operational Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Modernisation**

  This will modernise operational PPE in response to the expiry of the current supply contract, providing an opportunity to reassess and secure a new arrangement that better reflects the types of incidents attended and the changing operational environment. This will include consideration of lightweight fire kit, including options to support wildfire response, alongside the wider requirements for operational PPE. The work will ensure PPE is appropriately specified, safe and fit for purpose for current and emerging operational risks, while also supporting firefighter wellbeing, performance and long-term sustainability.

- **Contaminant Risk Reduction**

  We will take a service-wide approach to reducing firefighter exposure to harmful contaminants from operational activity. It will review current practices, fleet, estate, equipment, and procedures to strengthen standards and minimise risk, supporting the health, safety, and wellbeing of our workforce.

- **Next Generation Breathing Apparatus (BA)**

  This will deliver the procurement of new BA equipment in response to the expiry of the current contract. It will ensure the Service is equipped with safe, reliable, and modern respiratory protection that meets operational needs and supports firefighter safety in line with current and emerging risks.

- **Emergency Services Network (ESN) and Command & Control System**

  This project will support the Service's transition to the Emergency Services Network (ESN), a national programme that requires all emergency services to move to a new communications network. The Service is committed to supporting and delivering the national programme requirements and will work closely with partners to ensure a safe, effective and well-managed transition. Furthermore, the new Command & Control system, procured through the Networked Fire Service Partnership with three other fire and rescue services, will provide a modern and resilient communications platform. Its implementation will support our people by strengthening operational communications, information sharing and incident management, helping to ensure firefighters and staff have the reliable systems they need to work safely and effectively, both independently and alongside partner emergency services.

- **Annual Corporate Department Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability**

  The Annual Corporate Department Review will continue its established cycle of assessing efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability across corporate services, building on work undertaken over the past three years. The review ensures that corporate functions are streamlined and aligned to modern fire and rescue service requirements, enabling and supporting effective operational delivery to our communities. It examines capacity against changes in legislation, national direction, changing risk and service resilience, alongside succession planning for improved efficiency and organisational effectiveness.

- **Digital, Data and Technology**

  The Digital, Data and Technology teams will support the delivery of the projects across the Modernisation Programme. It will focus on ensuring the right digital architecture, data

governance, information management, systems integration, cyber resilience and technology is in place to support evidence-based decision-making, efficiency, and resilience. A priority in this area is a dedicated programme of work to develop and embed the safe, secure, effective and responsible use of artificial intelligence across the Service. Together, this work will provide the digital foundations needed to deliver connected, efficient, and sustainable modernisation across the Service.

- **Future Governance and Devolution Programme**

  It is important that the Service remains closely engaged with the Government's Devolution Programme and emerging proposals for local government reorganisation, to ensure it is well placed to respond to potential changes in local governance, regional collaboration and funding arrangements. The Service will continue to monitor developments and engage with relevant partners as proposals emerge, maintaining a focus on operational effectiveness, financial sustainability and strong local accountability**.** Where emerging proposals have implications for the governance, structure, funding or future delivery of the Service, these will be brought to the Fire Authority for consideration and decision where required.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Modernisation programme is designed to support the Service's ambition to modernise and meet the current and future demands of a fire and rescue service and will remain flexible to reflect any changes arising from future financial sustainability.

The pace, scale, and decisions for change are currently influenced by the Service's financial position. Greater funding stability would continue a more measured, structured, and sustainable approach to change, allowing ongoing modernisation in operational effectiveness and efficiency, while delivering required savings in a planned and controlled way.

The delivery of this programme will be led by the Service Support Directorate, with projects governed through the Service's well-established practice and Modernisation Programme & Strategic Projects Governance Framework, overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and scrutinised and assured through the Fire Authority's Finance & Audit Committee.

Updates on the Modernisation programme will be provided to Authority Members as part of the six monthly and annual performance presentations, in December and June annually.

Appendix A to the programme provides clarity over the delegations for each Modernisation programme project, aligned to the DWFRA Members Handbook, and confirmation of consultation and engagement to be undertaken.

Recognising the importance of staff engagement and the provision of timely information to our staff and representative bodies, Appendix A also includes our stakeholder matrix. This identifies which areas of work require consultation and engagement and which areas of work the Service are seeking to reach a local agreement, e.g. where there is a requirement to vary contracts of employment, therefore require negotiation and agreement with the appropriate representative body.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

These programme management principles will ensure that all projects provide:

- **Clear strategic alignment –** Every project must directly support the programme, Service priorities and long-term objectives.
- **Strong governance and accountability –** Defined decision-making structures, clear roles, and transparent accountability at every level.
- **Defined outcomes and benefits –** Focus on delivering measurable benefits and long-term sustainability, not just completing activities or projects.
- **Robust planning and prioritisation –** Realistic, well-sequenced plans that prioritise the most critical work within available capacity and resources.
- **Risk-based approach –** Active identification, assessment, and management of risks, with clear mitigation and escalation routes.
- **Effective stakeholder engagement –** Early and regular involvement of key stakeholders, ensuring shared understanding and involvement.
- **Representative body engagement –** Meaningful engagement with representative bodies, ensuring their views are considered and appropriate consultation is undertaken where required.
- **Data-led decision making –** Use of evidence, performance data, and insight to guide recommendations and decisions.
- **Integrated delivery approach –** Coordination across related projects to avoid duplication and ensure coherence.
- **Change management and culture focus –** A focus on effective change management supported by a positive organisational culture that enables people, behaviours, and leadership to deliver sustainable transformation.
- **Transparent reporting and assurance –** Regular, honest reporting of progress, risks, and issues to support informed oversight.
- **Flexibility and adaptability –** Ability to adjust to changing circumstances while maintaining focus on core outcomes.
- **Continuous improvement –** Learning from experience and applying lessons to improve delivery throughout the programme lifecycle.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Fire Officer	• Provide ultimate leadership and accountability for programme delivery. • Undertake Political and external strategic stakeholder engagement. • Make final decisions on matters within their delegated decision-making powers. • Ensuring that the Programme operates within the Authority's approved governance, accountability and delegation arrangements.

Finance & Audit Chair	• Lead the Finance & Audit committee's scrutiny and assurance of the Modernisation Programme on behalf of the Fire Authority.
	• Work with the Chief Fire Officer and Programme Sponsor to ensure Members receive clear, timely and proportionate information on progress, risks, issues, financial performance, benefits and delivery confidence.
	• Facilitate constructive Member challenge of evidence, assumptions, options, financial implications, risks and proposed mitigations.
	• Ensure the Committee understands whether it is:
	  • receiving assurance on a matter delegated to the CFO;
	  • making a decision within delegated authority; or

	• recommending or escalating a matter to the Fire Authority. • Identify where further information, Member engagement or a Members' Working Group is required. • Ensure significant gaps in assurance or concerns are formally recorded and escalated through the appropriate governance route. • Ensure the committee's assurance, recommendations and unresolved concerns are reported to the Fire Authority. • Provide appropriate oversight and challenge, whilst remaining independent of programme delivery.
Programme Lead	Area Manager, Service Improvement as the Programme Lead, will: • Lead and coordinate the delivery of the Modernisation Programme. • Maintain oversight of all Programme projects, monitoring progress, milestones and interdependencies. • Develop and maintain the Programme Plan and supporting governance documentation. • Chair the Project Oversight Group and ensure governance arrangements operate effectively. • Monitor Programme performance, identifying risks, issues and opportunities, and escalating matters where appropriate. • Coordinate Programme reporting for the Strategic Projects & Programme Board, SLT and Finance and Audit Committee. • Support the Programme Sponsor in providing updates and assurance to the SLT and Fire Authority. • Work with Project Sponsors and Project Leads to resolve issues, manage organisational impacts and support successful project delivery across the Modernisation Programme and wider strategic projects. • Monitor Programme benefits and promote continuous improvement through the capture of lessons learned. • Provide advice, guidance and challenge to Project Leads to ensure projects are delivered in accordance with the agreed governance framework.
Programme Sponsor	Director of Service Support, as Programme Sponsor will: • Provide strategic leadership, direction and sponsorship for the Modernisation Programme. • Ensure the Programme remains aligned with the Authority's strategic priorities, Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and organisational objectives. • Champion the Programme and promote a culture of continuous improvement, organisational change and effective implementation. • Provide strategic direction, constructive challenge and timely intervention to maintain Programme momentum and address barriers to delivery. • Support and facilitate effective decision-making, ensuring matters requiring formal executive or Authority-level decisions are appropriately escalated through the established governance arrangements. • Ensure effective Programme governance arrangements are in place and operating appropriately, with clear accountability, escalation and decision-making routes. • Oversee Programme performance, including progress, risks, dependencies, organisational impacts and benefits realisation. • Ensure that resource, capacity and organisational dependencies are identified and escalated where they may affect successful delivery. • Resolve issues within the scope of the Programme Sponsor's delegated authority and escalate matters outside that authority to the appropriate Chief Officer, governance body or the Fire Authority.

	• Provide assurance to the Strategic Leadership Team on Programme delivery, performance, risks, benefits and emerging issues. • Report Programme progress, risks, benefits and financial performance to the Finance and Audit Committee and Fire Authority, as appropriate. • Promote collaboration across Directorates and ensure that learning and lessons from the Programme are captured and embedded to support continuous improvement.
Strategic Leadership Team (All)	• Provide strategic leadership and champion the Modernisation Programme and wider strategic projects across the Service. • Ensure projects support the Authority's strategic priorities, Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and Directorate Strategies. • Consider and manage the organisational impacts of modernisation across their areas of responsibility. • Provide strategic challenge, direction and decision-making to support successful Programme and project delivery. • Ensure appropriate resources, capacity and support are available within their Directorates. • Promote collaboration across Directorates to support effective planning, implementation and benefits realisation. • Identify and escalate strategic risks, issues and opportunities that may impact Programme delivery.
Specific Additional SLT Programme roles	
Project Sponsor Responsibilities (SLT Member)	• Provide strategic leadership and direction for the project. • Champion the project and promote its objectives across the Service. • Ensure the project aligns with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Directorate Strategy, organisational priorities and the objectives of the Modernisation Programme. • Act as the project's senior decision-maker and approve the Project Initiation Document (PID), Project Mandate and significant project changes. • Secure appropriate resources and organisational support to enable successful project delivery. • Own the delivery and realisation of project benefits. • Provide support, challenge and direction to the Project Lead, removing strategic barriers to delivery where possible. • Ensure the project remains viable, delivers value for money and complies with the agreed Programme and project governance arrangements. • Work with the Programme Lead to provide timely progress updates, manage strategic risks and issues, and escalate matters to the Programme Sponsor or appropriate governance forum where required. • Approve project closure and confirm arrangements for benefits realisation and post-project review.
Director of Response	• Provide strategic oversight of the operational impacts of the Modernisation Programme and wider strategic projects on emergency response and station-based delivery. • Ensure changes support the continued delivery of safe and effective operational response. • Lead engagement with Representative Bodies on operational matters, working alongside the Director of People to support consultation and negotiation where changes affect operational employees. • Advise on operational readiness, resilience and workforce implications arising from Programme delivery.

	• Be the project sponsor of appropriate strategic projects and projects across directorate as appropriate.
Director of People	• Provide strategic oversight of workforce, organisational development and people-related impacts arising from the Modernisation Programme and wider strategic projects. • Ensure compliance with employment legislation, organisational change requirements and workforce policies. • Lead consultation and negotiation with Representative Bodies and Trade Unions, ensuring statutory consultation obligations are met and meaningful engagement is undertaken throughout programme delivery. • Advise on workforce planning, employee wellbeing, equality impacts and organisational change management. • Be the project sponsor of appropriate strategic projects and projects across directorate as appropriate.
Director of Corporate Services	• Provide advice on governance, constitutional and legal matters relating to the Modernisation Programme and wider strategic projects. • Ensure appropriate governance arrangements are maintained, and Authority decision-making requirements are met. • Provide strategic oversight of communications and engagement, ensuring consistent messaging to Members, employees, stakeholders and the public. • Be the project sponsor of appropriate strategic projects and projects across directorate as appropriate. • Escalate risks or issues within their professional areas that may impact the successful delivery of the Programme.
Director of Financial Services	• Provide strategic financial oversight of the Modernisation Programme and wider strategic projects. • Ensure robust financial governance, affordability and value for money. • Advise on financial risks, budget management and funding implications. • Ensure the Programme is managed in accordance with the Authority's financial regulations and statutory responsibilities. • Be the project sponsor of appropriate strategic projects and projects across directorate as appropriate.
Director of Prevention, Protection & Compliance	• Provide strategic oversight of health, safety and compliance implications arising from the Modernisation Programme and wider strategic projects. • Ensure proposals comply with the Service's statutory health and safety responsibilities and support effective risk management. • Advise on operational safety, regulatory compliance and organisational assurance where changes may impact service delivery. • Be the project sponsor of appropriate strategic projects and projects across directorate as appropriate.
Director of Service Support	• Undertake the role as the Programme Sponsor, with overall executive accountability for the successful delivery of the Modernisation Programme (as highlighted within this document) and alignment with wider strategic projects. • Be the project sponsor of appropriate strategic projects and projects across directorate as appropriate.

Meeting Structure

Meeting	Attendance	Frequency
SLT Oversight– Strategic Focus **Purpose:** Provides executive oversight of the Modernisation Programme and wider strategic projects, ensuring delivery remains aligned with the strategic priorities, Community Risk Management Plan and Modernisation programme objectives. SLT will deliver strategic decisions, provide and influence executive oversight, manage significant risks and resource implications, and set clear direction to support successful delivery.	**SLT will:** • Provide executive oversight of progress and delivery of strategic projects; • Review strategic risks and delivery confidence; • Approve significant changes to the scope, timescales or resources of strategic projects; • Consider cross-Service impacts; • Ensure alignment with corporate priorities and objectives; • Review progress across Directorate projects and activities outside the strategic projects, including consideration of workloads, interdependencies and wider Service impacts, to maintain appropriate awareness and support effective prioritisation; • Consider issues and matters escalated by Strategic Sponsors where these require wider Service consideration, coordination or decision-making; • Ensure that appropriate actions arising from its oversight and decisions are progressed and monitored. • Provide strategic direction and making decisions where required, within its delegated authority; • Ensure appropriate reporting to the Authority on the Modernisation programme progress, significant risks, issues and decisions; • Ensure that Modernisation programme proposals, decisions or changes falling outside the delegated authority of the CFO are appropriately reported to, escalated or referred to the Authority through the Finance & Audit Committee, and • Oversee the delivery of Programme and project benefits.	Monthly
Fire Authority – Delegated to Finance & Audit **Purpose** The Finance and Audit Committee, with delegated powers from the Authority' will provide Member scrutiny and assurance regarding delivery of the projects within the Modernisation Programme, as detailed in Appendix A.	**The Committee will:** • Receive high level assurance on the delivery and progress of the Modernisation Programme; • Scrutinise the Modernisation Programme highlight reports; • Scrutinise strategic risks, issues and proposed mitigation reported through the highlight report. • Receive assurance on the financial implications and anticipated benefits of the Programme;	6-Monthly

Wider strategic projects (noted in Appendix A) will be reported to SLT and will only be referred to the Finance and Audit Committee where Member awareness, assurance or decision is required, or where a matter falls outside officer delegated authority. The Committee will receive a strategic highlight report on the Modernisation Programme delivery, progress against the objectives, strategic risks, financial performance and overall assurance.	• Where projects or decisions within the Modernisation Programme fall outside the delegated authority of the CFO, direct the requirements for appropriate Member consideration, including through a Members Working Group, where recommendations are required to be brought forward to the Fire Authority; and • Provide high-level scrutiny and assurance on behalf of the Fire Authority.	
Fire Authority	Updates on the Modernisation programme will be provided to Authority Members as part of the six-and-12-month performance presentations, in December and June annually	6-Monthly

ENGAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

The Modernisation Programme will be supported by a comprehensive communications and engagement approach designed to ensure that staff, representative bodies, Members, communities, partners and other relevant stakeholders are appropriately informed and engaged throughout the programme. Engagement will be proportionate to the nature and significance of each proposal, with information provided in a timely, accessible and transparent manner and opportunities for those affected to contribute their views and provide relevant evidence.

The approach will support the Authority's commitment to open and transparent decision-making, ensuring that proposals are supported by clear information on the rationale, evidence, risks, impacts, financial implications and available options.

Where formal consultation or other statutory engagement is required, this will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant legal and governance requirements and tailored to the proposal and those affected. Consultation findings and the Service's response will be clearly documented and, where appropriate, included within reports presented for Member consideration and decision. Reports and supporting information will be made publicly available in accordance with the Authority's requirements, subject to applicable legal and confidentiality considerations.

The programme will also ensure that appropriate Member engagement takes place through the Authority's established governance arrangements, recognising the respective roles of Members and officers in developing, scrutinising and making decisions on proposals.

Engagement with Representative Bodies will continue through established Joint Working Group Meetings, providing opportunities for early engagement, discussion and consideration of matters affecting staff and the workforce. Matters requiring formal consultation/negotiation will be undertaken through established Representative Body Liaison meetings.

A Modernisation programme-level communications and engagement plan will be maintained and reviewed regularly to ensure that engagement remains timely, proportionate, coordinated and appropriate as individual projects develop. Appendix A sets out the expected levels of engagement for the different projects across the Modernisation programme, providing a consistent framework to help determine the appropriate approach for each project or proposal.

This approach will support effective participation, transparency and accountability, while maintaining a clear record of engagement undertaken and feedback received throughout the programme.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

All documents associated with the programme will be managed in accordance with good information management practices, supporting transparency, accountability and statutory compliance, while ensuring that a clear and appropriate audit trail is maintained throughout the programme.

The Service's project management governance will be used for all projects and appropriate documents developed and maintained.

Documents and supporting evidence and appendices will be appropriately marked, retained and made available in an ordered and structured manner.

Version	Update	Date	Changes Made	Approved
1.0	Original Document	01/04/2026	N/A	Approved 21/5/2026 (SLT)
2.0	Refined document aligned to the Authority decision in June 2026, the priorities and resource provisions.	28/09/2026	Review and update of the document to strengthen governance, update projects, and incorporate decisions made since June 2026.	Approved 07/10/2026 (SLT)

Appendix A

MODERNISATION PROGRAMME DELEGATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Project Name	**Decision-making responsibility**	**Project Status** (October 2026)	**Stakeholder Management**		
			Information	**Engagement**	**Consultation**
Station Reviews (Pending Government Precept decision – Feb 2027) *	Fire Authority (Decision confirmed)	Delivery Phase Subject to precept.	Public All staff		Affected staff Representative Bodies
On-call station future estate options (Pending Government Precept decision – Feb 2027) *	Fire Authority (Decision confirmed)	Delivery Phase Subject to precept	All Staff Public		Affected staff Representative Bodies
Introduction of rapid response vehicles (RRVs)*	Chief Fire Officer	Planned – Priority	Public All staff	Representative Bodies Affected Staff Members	
Training Provision Delivery	Fire Authority	Delivery Authority decision confirmed.	Public All staff		Affected Staff Representative Bodies
Estate Rationalisation Plan	Fire Authority (sale/removal)	Scoping	Public	Staff Members	Affected Staff Representative Bodies

	CFO (operational use)				
Second White Fleet Review*	Chief Fire Officer	Progressing	All staff Representative Bodies Members		
Wholetime Flexible working	Chief Fire Officer	Planned - Future	All staff Members Public		Affected Staff Representative body (may require local agreement)
Demand Led Station Availability Review*	Chief Fire Officer	Planned - Priority	Public All staff	Representative Bodies Affected staff Members	
Station Optimisation Programme*	Fire Authority	Planned - Pending			Representative Bodies Staff Public
Wider Second Aways Review*	Chief Fire Officer	Planned - Pending	Public All Staff Members	Affected staff Representative Bodies	
Special Appliance Review*	Chief Fire Officer	Progressing	All Staff	Representative Bodies	

			Public Members	Affected Staff	

Key:

Stakeholder Engagement	
Information	Providing clear, accessible and timely information about a proposal, decision or change. Information does not provide a specific opportunity to influence the decision.
Engagement	Providing stakeholders with an opportunity to understand a proposal, ask questions, provide views and relevant evidence, and for that feedback to be considered as the proposal develops or is implemented.
Consultation	A formal process of seeking and considering views on a defined proposal before a decision is made, undertaken where required by law, employment arrangements, governance requirements or the nature of the proposal
Project Status	
Planned – Priority	The project has not commenced, however has been identified as a priority for this year.
Planned - Pending	The project has not commenced, however work to develop the data and research to support this project will commence this year.
Planned – Future	This project has not commenced and has been highlighted as a project to commence within the next CRMP.
Scoping	The project has commenced its early scoping stage with a mandate being developed.
In progress	Project scope and mandate have been approved, and the project is being progressed.
Delivery Phase	A decision on this project has been taken and the delivery of this is progressing.
Delivery Phase – subject to precept	A decision on this project has been taken and will depend on the outcome of the precept position. The delivery phase of this project will commence once the precept position is confirmed.
Decision-making responsibility	
Chief Fire Officer –	Decisions within delegated operational and service responsibilities, subject to Authority policy, approved budgets and the limitations of the Scheme of Delegation.
Fire Authority –	Decisions reserved to the Authority, including significant policy changes, significant proposals for public consultation, budget/precept matters and matters relating to significant changes in service provision