



Home Office

# **Review of the Fire Transformation Fund projects: two years on Progress at April 2017**

Second edition

## **Research Report 98**

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# Executive summary

## Introduction and background

This report provides a review of the progress of projects two years after receiving Fire Transformation Fund (FTF) grant funding in April 2015, covering:

- the proportion of the FTF spent at the two-year point
- the issues or barriers and lessons learned for possible future funding schemes
- a description of some completed projects in more detailed case studies

In April 2015, £75 million in grant funding was awarded to 37 projects under the FTF by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).<sup>1</sup> The aim of the FTF was to facilitate Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to carry out projects to improve the efficiency of public services. Based on the information contained in the successful bids it was anticipated that the projects would save approximately £300m in the ten-year period between years ending 31 March 2016 to 2025.

The information in this report and all calculations completed for the purpose of the report are based on the six-monthly monitoring returns from September 2015 to April 2017 as supplied by each of the projects to DCLG and, from April 2016, to the Home Office.<sup>2</sup> This report has not made an assessment of the assumptions underpinning the initial estimated savings in the bids received by DCLG. It also does not measure the extent to which savings have been realised at the two-year stage, but updates any changes to anticipated savings over the ten-year period as reported by the FRAs in their monitoring returns. It is important to note that since April 2017 there will have been changes to the status of the projects which will not be reflected.

## Key findings

- In April 2015, a total of £75 million was awarded to 37 projects across 30 FRAs:
  - 22 projects received up to £2 million
  - 13 projects received between £2 million and £5 million
  - 2 received over £5 million
- For the purposes of this report the projects were divided into four, not mutually exclusive, categories:
  - **Building:** The 20 building projects were generally large and relatively high value, often in conjunction with other partners including the police or ambulance services.
  - **Collaboration:** The seven collaboration projects involved working with other

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<sup>1</sup> Kent FRA cancelled their project before receiving the full amount of funding approved. Therefore, for the majority of the report the number of projects is 36 and the full level of funding provided was £74.65m.

<sup>2</sup> The responsibility for fire policy transferred to the Home Office in April 2016.

emergency services on non-building projects such as training or transport functions.

- **Prevention:** Three projects focused on prevention.
- **Workforce:** The six workforce projects involved gaining efficiencies through changing the organisation of the workforce.
- The timescale for completing the projects was 12 months. As of April 2017, ten projects had been fully completed but only three had completed within the specified 12 months, suggesting that this timescale was not sufficient for the scope and scale of many of the projects.
- Of the ten projects that had completed, most had already started before receiving the FTF grant and it is likely that this contributed to the projects finishing within two years. The completed projects were also less likely to involve large-scale building work.
- Overall, at the 24-month stage, the 36 projects had spent approximately £40.8 million (55%) of the total FTF amount. The ten completed projects had spent £10.85 million.
- The 26 projects which had yet to complete had made varying levels of progress as of April 2017. From the information in the monitoring returns:
  - eight projects appeared to be very near completion having spent more than 90% of their allocated grant
  - six were still at very early stages and had spent less than 10% of the grant received
- Issues common to the delayed projects included gaining planning permission, identifying and securing building sites, tendering or procurement of contracts, and IT system or technology issues.
- Some of the ten completed projects revised their savings estimates as the projects had progressed, resulting in a slight reduction in the total savings expected to be achieved over the ten-year period for these projects – from £95.9 million to £90.6 million. If the estimated savings are realised this would result in a return of £8 for every £1 awarded.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background to the Fire Transformation Fund

In 2015 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) gave £75m in grants to 30 Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) under the banner of the Fire Transformation Fund (FTF). The aim of the FTF was to improve the efficiency of services for the public by facilitating projects over the short-term (with expenditure taking place in the year 2015 to 2016) and to provide efficiencies over a short to medium term (within ten years).

The FTF was made up of two separate forms of funding: resource and capital. The resource funding of £30m was to support transformational change, including opportunities identified in the Knight Review<sup>3</sup> such as more blue light centres which share back office functions and run joint response systems. The £45m capital fire efficiency incentive funding was intended to encourage greater collaboration and FRA investment in building projects to site fire stations in the most appropriate locations.

The bidding process<sup>4</sup> for the FTF opened in March 2014. Projects were assessed against a number of criteria:

1. **Value for money (40%):**<sup>5</sup> The value for money criteria was achieved when the net present value for the public sector divided by the total amount for the bid was a positive value.
2. **Transformation policy alignment (40%):** The project was required to support the five themes for the transformation policy:
  - Encouraging greater collaboration
  - Improving local accountability
  - Increasing on-call arrangements
  - Prioritising prevention and protection
  - Promoting asset transformation / other efficiencies
3. **Project deliverability (20%):** The projects were required to be deliverable and have good project management arrangements.

The projects allocated funding were announced in October 2014. In May 2015, £75m funding was paid to 37 projects in 30 of the 45 FRAs in England. DCLG announced that the projects

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<sup>3</sup> Sir Ken Knight (2013) *Facing the future: Findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/facing-the-future>

<sup>4</sup> Details of bidding process available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/286904/140220\\_prospectus\\_guidance\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/286904/140220_prospectus_guidance_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Details of value for money assessment process available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/286906/140220\\_Annex\\_A\\_Guidance\\_-\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/286906/140220_Annex_A_Guidance_-_FINAL.pdf)

receiving this funding would save the taxpayer over £300m over the ten-year period of years ending 31 March 2016 to 2025.<sup>6</sup>

The funds were paid to FRAs as non-ring-fenced targeted grants under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2010, which gives ministers powers to make grants to local authorities. Departments expect local authorities to use non-ring-fenced targeted grants for specific purposes. This is set out in each grant's determination, which grant-giving departments give to local authorities explaining the amount and purpose of each grant. Ultimately, however, there are no conditions attached to this funding.

## 1.2. Aim of this report

This report summarises the progress of the FTF projects in the two-year period following the distribution of the grants. It also fulfils a commitment to the Public Accounts Committee to evaluate these projects. It should be noted that when the grants were awarded, the responsibility for fire policy lay with DCLG but moved to the Home Office in April 2016. At the time of the awards it was not the intention to undertake an evaluation of the impact, costs and benefits of the FTF projects and therefore this report is largely based on the limited six-monthly monitoring returns completed by each project. It is also the case that the majority of the projects were not complete at the two-year stage, further limiting the conclusions that can be drawn about the impact of the projects.

This report, however, does provide a summary of the progress of each project at the two-year stage, including:

- the proportion of the FTF spent at the two-year point
- the issues or barriers and lessons learned for possible future funding schemes
- describing a number of the completed projects in detailed case studies

## 1.3. Method

This report is largely based on the six-monthly monitoring returns requested by DCLG and which have continued to be submitted to the Home Office. These returns include:

- the amount of funding spent at each six-monthly point
- any alterations to the project timescale
- any alterations to the estimated savings to be achieved over the ten-year period from years ending 31 March 2016 to 2025
- a description of the progress and issues faced during the project

For the purposes of this report, the information contained in the monitoring returns was collated and broken down by completed and incomplete projects, with additional breakdowns by the type of project. The level of detail provided in the monitoring returns is relatively limited and also varies between the FRAs, therefore the report is not a comprehensive assessment of the implementation and impact of the projects. However, some thematic analysis of the types of issues experienced has been possible and is included.

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<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fire-services-improvement-fund-public-get-a-win-win-better-local-services-and-at-lower-cost>

The information from the monitoring returns is supplemented by a number of case studies of completed projects. These case studies outline the costs and benefits in more detail and discuss some of the obstacles faced by the FRAs in completing these projects. It should be noted that as the savings period runs from year ends 31 March 2016 to 2025, many of the anticipated savings have not yet been realised even though the projects have been completed. Therefore, the case studies are not able to provide value for money assessment of the projects. It is also important to note that since April 2017 there will have been changes to the status of the projects which will not be reflected.

We have not been able to independently verify the information provided by the FRAs and have not tested the assumptions included in the savings assessments. This report includes the figures as provided by the FRA which should be treated with caution as the estimated savings may not be achieved at the levels stated and may change over time.

## 2. The Fire Transformation Fund projects

### 2.1. Overview of projects

In April 2015, £75m was paid out to 37 projects across 30 FRAs. These projects were selected on the basis of passing the three criteria which formed the bidding process – providing value for money, being aligned with policy and being deliverable.

The FTF tender was split into lots to encourage a range of projects of different sizes to apply. The lots were categorised as:

- large-sized projects (£5 million plus)
- medium-sized projects (£2 million to £5 million)
- small-sized projects (up to £2 million)

Of the 37 successful projects, 22 were small-sized, 13 were medium and two were large. Generally, the small projects did not have high capital costs whilst the large projects were mainly mergers and rebuilds of fire and other emergency service stations. The largest grant value was £5.96m (Surrey project 2) and the smallest was £220,000 (Essex).

As part of their bid assessment, FRAs provided a breakdown of efficiency savings that they expected to make from the implementation of their projects. The information provided allows a total figure of returns on the investment for the department to be calculated. The average savings expected from all FTF projects across the ten-year period is approximately £4 for every £1 of the department's investment; at the two-year point this is unchanged from initial bid estimates despite many projects adjusting their savings projections. The total value of savings expected is around £303.5m. More details about saving adjustments and projections is provided later in this report.

### 2.2. Types of project

For the purposes of this review, the projects are broken down into four categories:

- Building
- Collaboration
- Prevention
- Workforce

These categories overlap in some places, for example a building project that provides a new headquarters for fire and police services will also include collaboration; however, as the funding was used to finance the building work these projects are placed in the building category. Many projects will have led to benefits in a number of areas, for example they may result in savings in terms of reduced operating costs through the sharing of buildings, and additional savings through closer collaboration such as shared back office functions.



Table 1 summarises the costs and savings anticipated for each of the categories. According to the information supplied by FRAs, building projects represent the highest proportion (64%) of spending from the FTF and, if the projected savings are achieved, approximately 50% of all savings. Workforce projects are expected to achieve the best value for money, representing 11% of the funding but approximately 16% of savings expected.

**Table 1: Summary of project categories<sup>7</sup>**

Category	Number of projects	Costs		Savings	
		Grant value	% of total costs	Savings expected	% of total savings
Building	20	£47.87m	64%	£151.3m	50%
Collaboration	7	£10.80m	14%	£57.3m	19%
Prevention	3	£7.98m	11%	£45.1m	15%
Workforce	6	£8.00m	11%	£49.8m	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>£74.65m</b>		<b>£303.5m</b>	

The following sections look at each of the project categories in detail. This includes providing an outline of the aims and the costs, as well as the savings that these projects expect to make over a ten-year period from years ending 31 March 2016 to 2025. These figures are taken directly from monitoring returns provided by the FRAs; as they only cover the beginning of the savings period it is not possible to tell with any accuracy at this stage whether these savings will be met, therefore the savings figures should be treated with caution.

### 2.3. Building projects

The majority (20) of the projects fall under this category; examples include changes to existing fire stations, and merging police or ambulance stations with fire stations (see Table 2).

Building projects are mostly large and relatively high value, cumulatively totalling £47.87m or 64% of the total grant amount. Nearly all (16) building projects have a value of over £1m and 11 projects have a value of over £2m. On average, building projects predict savings of approximately £3 for every £1 of public spending, which is the lowest average across all categories. However, as this is the largest category, the total savings over the ten-year period are the highest across all categories at around £151m.

Many building projects also involve collaboration with other emergency services, for example using joint headquarters to increase collaborative working between police or ambulance services and fire, and therefore also overlap with the collaboration project category. These projects may have received funding from elsewhere, including police or ambulance partners, in addition to the money received from the FTF.

<sup>7</sup> For comprehensive information on all of the projects see Appendix A which provides information on each of the 37 projects including descriptions, financial information, project progress and projected savings.

<sup>8</sup> Kent FRA cancelled their project before receiving the full amount of funding approved. Therefore, for the remainder of the report the number of projects is 36 and the full level of funding provided was £74.65m.

A specific example of a building project overlapping with other categories is Hereford & Worcester project 2, which aims to merge two existing stations and includes collaboration with police to develop joint community safety initiatives and ambulance functions. Therefore, this project has a joint focus on prevention and collaboration with other emergency services. Some of the building projects also have implications for fire and other emergency service workforce; for example, Warwickshire is building new fire stations which aim to move the workforce to strategic locations and to increase the number of on-call fire fighters.

**Table 2: Building projects**

FRA	Project description	Grant awarded
Avon	Merge two fire stations into one, including partial re-build and refurbishment of one.	£1,050,000
Buckinghamshire	Create a new joint fire and police station by merging two old fire stations and a police site.	£2,840,687
Cleveland	Close three stations and replace with two new community fire stations; recruit 48 on-call firefighters and transition four appliances (vehicles) from whole time to on-call.	£2,800,000
Cumbria	Create a new fire, ambulance and police centre, including a separate accommodation block for an on-call duty system.	£4,677,030
Derbyshire	Build a new joint police and fire headquarters.	£1,500,000
Durham	Build joint emergency services building which will house police, fire, ambulance and also the local Mountain Rescue Team.	£3,783,365
Hampshire – 1	New joint police and fire service headquarters, plus co-location at fire stations and fleet maintenance partnerships.	£2,597,628
Hereford & Worcester – 1	Merge existing stations, including collaboration with police to develop joint community safety initiatives and co-response with ambulance service.	£2,383,200
Hereford & Worcester – 2	Co-locate headquarter functions of police and fire services, with shared services.	£1,886,700
Hertfordshire	Collaborate with county council to relocate library services in four villages to on-call fire stations.	£700,000
Lancashire – 2	Co-locating fire and ambulance services at a new fire station providing opportunity to develop a co-responding scheme.	£2,437,500
Merseyside	Merge seven fire stations into three, which will be shared with police and ambulance services, to include on-call firefighter crews.	£4,468,500
North Yorkshire	Build a new efficient and more effective transport and logistics facility.	£2,422,539
Northumberland	Relocate a fire station to the hospital to assist in closer working and allowing for residence facilities for doctors on on-call emergency cover.	£912,000

FRA	Project description	Grant awarded
South Yorkshire	Co-locate fire and police station on the existing police site in Maltby.	£560,000
Staffordshire – 1 <sup>9</sup>	Open a new joint fire station and ambulance service, also containing a Lifeskills Centre.	£3,963,775
Staffordshire – 2	Create a Tri-Service Neighbourhood Service on the site of the existing fire station.	£1,175,000
Suffolk	Co-locate police, county council and ambulance services across seven building projects. (Also received funding from the Home Office's Police Innovation Fund.)	£4,943,356
Tyne & Wear	Co-locate police and fire services at six fire stations.	£930,000
Warwickshire	Increase on-call firefighters and establish two new strategic locations.	£1,837,450
<b>Total</b>		<b>£47,868,730</b>

## 2.4. Collaboration projects

Projects falling under this category include other ways of collaboration between emergency services, for example sharing vehicles, technology, insurance and training, but which do not include building works (see Table 3).

The seven collaboration projects received a total £10.8m, or 14% of the total funding. There are a number of smaller collaboration projects, for example Devon & Somerset, Essex and Surrey project 1 all cost less than £400,000. However, there are also large projects such as Surrey project 2, which at £5.96m is the largest project overall.

On average, collaboration projects expect to save approximately £5 for every £1 of public spending. The total estimated savings across the ten-year period examined are approximately £57.3m. These savings are driven by Devon & Somerset who expect that their project will make returns of around £73 for every £1 of government spending, which is exceptionally high. Devon & Somerset's project aims to establish a procurement hub in collaboration with Kent and Essex, and the savings will be incurred through consolidating the best value deals in procurement. This project is still ongoing and it should be noted that all savings are subject to change. When Devon & Somerset are excluded from the analysis, the savings in this category are expected at £3 for every £1 of public spending.

Similar to the building projects, some collaboration projects include FRAs collaborating with other emergency services, such as the police, and also with other FRAs. A particularly innovative project is Essex where it has established an insurance pooling syndicate of nine FRAs. Also, Northamptonshire project 2 utilises shared resources between fire and police by purchasing joint rural response vehicles.

<sup>9</sup> Since April 2017 Staffordshire have revised their project plans and returned approximately £1m to the Home Office.

**Table 3: Collaboration projects**

FRA	Project description	Grant awarded
Devon & Somerset	Establish a procurement hub to build a national procurement capability, in collaboration with Kent and Essex.	£374,100
Essex	Lead a syndicate of nine FRAs to establish an insurance pooling arrangement open to all FRAs.	£220,000
London	To implement data transfer between fire, ambulance and police control rooms to support joint incidents.	£763,290
Northamptonshire – 1	Replace current fire service incident command unit vehicle with new purpose-built vehicle jointly crewed by police and fire staff.	£876,144
Northamptonshire – 2	Purchase joint rural response vehicles for police and fire. Expanding system for on-call firefighter arrangements to include Police Specials, volunteers and maximise new technology.	£2,275,243
Surrey – 1	Provide clinical and trauma training for all front line firefighters and install publicly accessible defibrillators at all Surrey fire stations in collaboration with ambulance service.	£337,762
Surrey – 2	Develop a new joint fleet management function covering Surrey and Sussex fire, police and ambulance services.	£5,955,636
<b>Total</b>		<b>£10,802,175</b>

## 2.5. Prevention projects

This small category includes prevention focused projects (see Table 4). The three prevention projects received a total of £7.98m, or 11% of the total funding. This category on average expects to make savings of approximately £6 for every £1 of public money spent, or a total of approximately £45.1m in savings.

It is important to note that prevention and protection is a substantial part of fire and rescue activities; however, due to the nature of these projects, predicting their potential savings can be challenging. FRAs have made calculations based on predictions that the number of fires will fall as a result of prevention activities, therefore less resources will be needed and monetary savings will be made. However, whilst it is likely that prevention activities contribute to changes in fire trends, directly attributing and quantifying any change to these activities is difficult, particularly given that changes in fire trends are likely to be the cumulative effect of a number of factors, such as broader societal changes.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, any savings may not be causally linked.

<sup>10</sup> Home Office (2017) *Focus on trends in fires and fire-related fatalities*. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/650869/focus-trends-fires-fatalities-oct17.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/650869/focus-trends-fires-fatalities-oct17.pdf)

**Table 4: Prevention projects**

FRA	Project description	Grant awarded
Cheshire	Fund a Safety and Life Skills Centre to educate those most at risk of accidental death or injury, focusing on prevention and protection.	£1,947,500
Greater Manchester – 2	With Salford City Council, creating four prevention hubs supporting young people.	£491,420
Wiltshire	Merge with Dorset FRA to include multi-agency strategic hub for education, changes to ICT infrastructure, and support for transitional arrangements.	£5,539,550
<b>Total</b>		<b>£7,978,470</b>

## 2.6. Workforce projects

These projects focus specifically on making efficiencies through changes in the workforce and align with the bid assessment criteria of increasing on-call arrangements (see Table 5). For example, updating technology which allows for flexible on-call arrangements and running bespoke recruitment campaigns.

The six workforce projects received a total of £8m, or 11% of the total funding. These projects expect to make total savings of approximately £49.8m, an average of £6 savings for every £1 of public spending. Oxfordshire estimates a particularly high return on investment of almost £16 per £1 spent through working in collaboration with Lincolnshire and Devon & Somerset to develop and run a new recruitment campaign for on-call firefighters. Workforce savings are due to the reduction of wholetime firefighter roles and an increase in on-call firefighters.

**Table 5: Workforce projects**

FRA	Project description	Grant awarded
Bedfordshire	Review the existing system for on-call firefighters.	£308,000
Cambridgeshire	In collaboration with Bedfordshire and Devon & Somerset, develop a cloud-ready service for on-call firefighter recruitment.	£1,445,000
Greater Manchester – 1	A police, fire and ambulance prevention and protection collaboration to create ten multi-functional teams via an on-call payment model.	£3,730,240
Hampshire – 2	Transform on-call services by using smaller early intervention vehicles and collaborating with ambulance services to attend more medical emergencies.	£1,392,385
Lancashire – 1	Converting a fire station to on-call crewing by providing an on-site accommodation block.	£565,000
Oxfordshire	In collaboration with Lincolnshire and Devon & Somerset, improve on-call firefighter recruitment and training.	£560,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£8,000,625</b>

## 3. Status of the projects after two years

### 3.1. Overview of progress

FRAs were requested to submit six-monthly monitoring returns detailing the progress of their projects, covering:

- the proportion of funding spent at each six-month point
- any alterations to the timescale of the project
- any alterations to the estimated savings to be achieved
- a description of the progress and issues faced during the project

As of April 2017, on receipt of the two-year monitoring returns, the projects had spent approximately £40.8m, or 55% of the total FTF amount, and ten of the 36 projects had been completed. Of these ten completed projects, nine were small-scale projects and the other was medium-sized. These projects were also less likely to have involved building work, and were more likely to have already started. Further details about these projects and the savings they estimate to achieve are included later in this section.

The remaining 26 projects were at various stages of completeness at the two-year point. Some projects were almost ready to be formally signed off as completed, whereas others had experienced delays and remained in the early stages. As these projects are still ongoing, the savings anticipated may be subject to further changes; details about the anticipated savings are included in Annex A. A number of these projects are complex and the original DCLG target of spending the full FTF amount within the year ending 31 March 2016 may have been overly ambitious and not easily achievable.

### 3.2. Ongoing projects

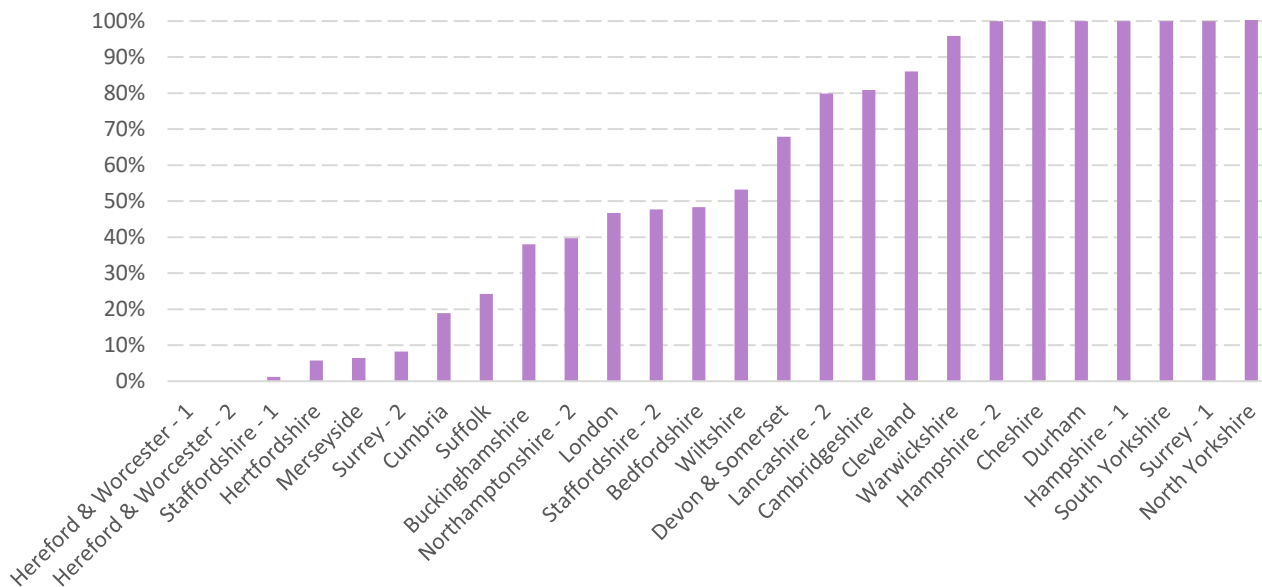
The 26 ongoing projects have spent approximately £29.55m, or 46%, of their total grant amount.

- Seven projects have spent their total grant amounts but have not been signed off for a variety of reasons.
- Six projects have spent between 50% and 99%.
- Eleven projects have spent between 1% and 49%.
- Two projects – Hereford & Worcester projects 1 and 2 – have not spent any of their grant.<sup>11</sup>

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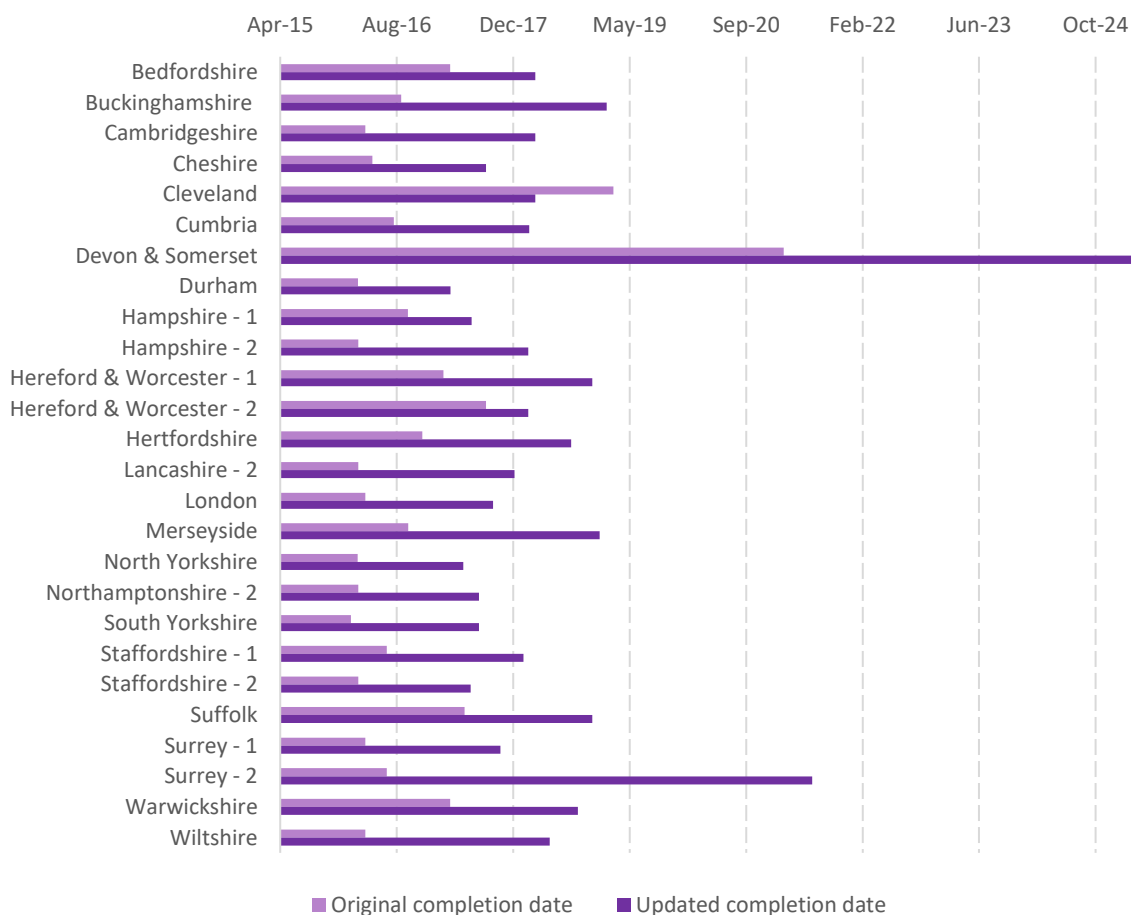
<sup>11</sup> Hereford and Worcester project 1 has been subject to two rounds of public consultation which has delayed the project by over two years; however, the latest returns mention that procurement for this project is now about to begin. Hereford and Worcester project 2 has experienced significant problems establishing a site to begin building work and is also interlinked with their other project, leading to delays.

Chart 1 shows the proportion of grant spent for each of these projects.



**Chart 1: Proportion of grant spent for each incomplete project as at April 2017**

As stipulated in the grant application, most projects were initially due to have been completed by March 2016; as previously mentioned, this timescale was unrealistic for the majority of the projects. Many of the projects experienced delays pushing back completion dates. Chart 2 shows the original completion dates for the incomplete projects and the anticipated completion dates as at April 2017.



**Chart 2: Original and anticipated project completion dates as at April 2017**

### 3.3. Reasons for delays

The incomplete projects experienced a range of unexpected issues during their implementation. Table 6 outlines the main issues which led to delays as described in the monitoring returns.

**Table 6: Frequently experienced issues**

Issue	Number of projects experiencing issue
Gaining planning permission	11
Identifying or buying new building site	9
Tendering or procurement of contracts	7
Changes with stakeholders involved	6
IT systems or technology hold-ups	5
Building contractors	3
Changes to stations included in the project	2
Other	6

The issue most commonly experienced was gaining planning permission to build new buildings or refurbish existing buildings. Eleven projects cited this as an issue with the reasons for delay including: difficulties securing a suitable site to build on; securing involvement or funding from other stakeholders and emergency services; and underestimating the time that it would take to obtain planning permission. For example, Merseyside were unable to gain planning permission on one site, resulted in them having to find an alternative site which required a more complex planning process due to being positioned on greenbelt land.

Other frequently mentioned issues included problems with selecting a suitable site for a new building and delays with the tendering or procurement of contracts. This included contracts for building work as well as additional contracts for designing and consultancy work. For example, Durham amended initial plans to reduce overall costs and, as a result, tendering exercises had to be re-issued leading to slippage in project timings.

Many projects experienced more than one issue and/or issues which impacted on later stages of the project. For example, Buckinghamshire is managing an incomplete project which was due for completion in September 2016 but has been delayed until February 2019. The project aims to merge two fire stations and a police site into a modern joint facility. It has experienced a range of issues including planning permission, tendering or procurement, building contractors, and an increase in the number of stakeholders engaged. Specifically, issues have involved using a more complex type of surveying to provide costs for the project which consequently delayed the procurement process.

### 3.4. Completed projects

Of the ten projects completed by April 2017:



- two (Avon and Essex) finished in 2015
- six projects completed in 2016 (Derbyshire, Greater Manchester projects 1 and 2, Lancashire project 1, Northamptonshire project 1 and Oxfordshire)
- two projects (Tyne & Wear and Northumberland) completed in early 2017

The total amount awarded from the FTF to projects which completed by April 2017 was £10.85m. Some of the projects also received additional funding from other sources such as FRA financial reserves, or from stakeholders such as police or ambulance services. Two completed projects did not report spending the total grant amount (Greater Manchester project 2 and Lancashire project 1). Table 7 outlines the amount awarded to each project and the estimated savings projections from years ending 31 March 2016 to 2025.

**Table 7: Completed project details**

FRA	Type of project	Awarded	Estimated savings	Change in savings from original estimate
Avon	Building	£1,050,000	£12,700,000	No change
Derbyshire	Building	£1,500,000	£14,500,000	No change
Essex	Collaboration	£220,000	£2,800,000	Increase
Greater Manchester – 1	Workforce	£3,730,240	£31,300,000	Decrease
Greater Manchester – 2	Prevention	£491,420	£6,500,000	No change
Lancashire – 1	Workforce	£565,000	£3,100,000	No change
Northamptonshire – 1	Collaboration	£876,144	£1,200,000	No change
Northumberland	Building	£912,000	£2,400,000	Increase
Oxfordshire	Workforce	£560,000	£9,300,000	No change
Tyne & Wear	Building	£930,000	£6,800,000	Increase
<b>Total</b>		<b>£10,834,804</b>	<b>£90,600,000</b>	

The savings projection at the two-year point for the completed projects was approximately £90.6m, a return of £8 for every £1 awarded to FRAs but £5.3m less than the original estimated savings. The decrease in the expected savings was driven by the Greater Manchester project 1 which had projected around a £7m decrease in the original savings estimate, from £95.9m to £90.6m. However, this was slightly offset by an increase in the expected savings from the Essex, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear projects which expected to cumulatively save around an additional £2m compared with their original savings projection. It should be noted that the majority of the anticipated savings were yet to be realised as the projects were only a small way through the ten-year savings period.

Of the ten completed projects, only three (Avon, Essex and Lancashire project 1) were completed by the initial completion date. A common theme among those three projects is that they did not encounter some of the commonly experienced issues, for example many did not require building work or, where they did, this was already underway before the funding was

granted. For example, Essex, who established an insurance pool in collaboration with nine other FRAs, did not require building work and the project was already partially running.

### 3.5. Case studies of completed projects

A selection of projects that completed before April 2017 are outlined in the following case studies.

#### Case study: Derbyshire

**Project description:** Build a new joint police and fire headquarters

**Project category:** Building

**FTF grant received:** £1.50 million

**Estimated total ten-year savings:** £14.5 million

**Completed:** November 2016

**Project objective:** Derbyshire received £1.5 million from the FTF towards building a new joint police and fire headquarters at Butterley Hall, Ripley. This project was part of a wider programme of increased collaboration between Derbyshire Police and fire and rescue services which also included the co-location of some police and fire stations and a new joint training centre.

#### Overview

The programme to improve collaboration began in August 2013 and started with an options appraisal of the best governance and legal arrangements for the two organisations to work together. Based on the objectives of the two organisations and advice from a number of independent sources, the Derbyshire Police and Fire Partnership (DPFP), a limited liability partnership (LLP), was formed in December 2014. The LLP has created a formally recognised partnership that provides a 25-year financial lock down and legal clauses for dispute resolution and dissolving assets. However, the LLP still allows the partners to maintain individual identities, such as their registered names and separate legal personalities and external contracts. The Police and Crime Commissioner and the chair of the FRA are joint chairs of the DPFP and have equal voting rights under the partnership.

The joint fire and police headquarters project began in January 2015 with site enabling works, following which construction began in August 2015. This was completed by August 2016, with full occupation of the building by November 2016.

There were a number of aspects of the project which both the police and fire service considered particularly important to the successful delivery of the build, including:

- **Strong partnership approach.** This was governed by the LLP arrangement but was strengthened by each work stream having a primary and secondary lead, one of which was from the police and the other from fire.
- **Board arrangements.** There were two separate boards: the DPFP management board who had overarching governance of the project and the operational board who managed the day-to-day running of the project.
- **Communications.** Communications teams from fire and police worked together to

develop common messages across both organisations. The project teams also held 'myth busting' online sessions so that staff could ask questions and express concerns.

- **Working culture.** In the new headquarters, staff are grouped by their area of work, e.g. finance and human resources, rather than their organisation to improve joint working and foster a joint-working culture.

These aspects of the project ensured that the move was completed successfully with little impact on business continuity and generally good staff feedback.

There were also some challenges to delivering the project, most of which were successfully overcome, including:

- **Initial set-up.** Establishing joint working and ensuring that the legal and governance structures were right were time consuming. In particular the LLP took substantial additional administration and establishment costs but was considered worthwhile for a project of this scale. Generally, it was felt that investing in the start-up time and costs enabled the smooth delivery of the project.
- **Security.** In order to share offices, all Derbyshire FRA staff were required to obtain the higher level of security clearance that Derbyshire Police hold. This process was costly and it was therefore decided that the financial burden was to be split between police and fire. This also helped encourage collaborative working.
- **Technology.** Creating a shared network for both police and fire to work from was a large hurdle as the individual police and fire networks have different security requirements. Unlocking this issue would allow greater opportunities for shared working; however, this would require substantial investment.

### *Savings position*

The project is on track to achieve the estimated savings of £14.5m over the ten-year period of years ending 31 March 2016 to 2025. These savings are being made through efficiencies gained by: sharing the headquarters building costs such as maintenance and utilities; the sale of the old headquarters; and additional joint working including procurement, recruitment and other back office functions.

Additional joint-working projects between the police and fire services are planned. This includes the almost completed joint training centre which is on the same site as the new headquarters and includes a range of facilities for both police and fire. It is also being made available for other FRAs to use. Other building projects include a wider estate rationalisation plan, which is led by a single Head of Estates for Police and Fire, and includes housing some Safer Neighbourhood policing teams in fire stations to reduce building costs. This programme of work began in March 2017.

## Case study: Essex

**Project description:** To lead a syndicate of nine FRAs to establish an insurance pooling arrangement open to all FRAs

**Project category:** Collaboration

**FTF grant received:** £220,000

**Estimated total ten-year savings:** £2.8 million

**Completed:** October 2015

**Project objective:** Essex FRA lead the set-up of a syndicate of nine FRAs (which also included Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Devon & Somerset, Hampshire, Kent and Leicestershire) to develop a vehicle insurance pool to save money on vehicle insurance costs. The FTF grant was to support the initial set-up of the new legal entity, the cost of the pool manager, support for the procurement process, and consultancy fees.

### *Overview*

Prior to the awarding of the FTF grant, nine FRAs had undertaken a feasibility study (in March 2013) to explore a number of different insurance pooling schemes and look at the potential savings options. The results from the feasibility study recommended forming an insurance pool that participating FRAs pay contributions to and make insurance claims from. This would aim to share risk and reduce insurance costs. The study proposed a particular type of insurance pool: a hybrid pooling model with a discretionary pool for smaller claims and conventional insurance for larger claims. The pool would be funded by contributions from the participating FRAs. This style of model is used by other organisations, such as universities, who share common risks.

By examining five years of historic insurance claims data from the nine founding FRAs and the insurance premiums that were previously paid by those FRAs, a cost effectiveness model for the new insurance option was produced and potential savings estimates calculated. It was estimated that there would be around £2.3million in savings, as contributions to a new insurance pool would be less than the previous insurance premiums paid by FRAs.

Once the grant from the FTF was received, the preliminary work to set up the insurance pool began in April 2015. This initially updated the cost effectiveness modelling work carried out for the feasibility study by adding a further two years of claims data. This increased the estimated savings figures for the ten-year period of years ending 31 March 2016 to 2025 from £2.3 million to £2.8 million. By August 2015, all nine FRAs had agreed to set up the pool. The pool started in November 2015, in line with the initial project plan.

The project set up a legal entity, the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC), to operate the insurance pool. The FRIC board members were voted into place from the participating FRAs.

FRIC also funds The Fire and Rescue Risk Group (FARRG), who uses the extensive information available from the historic claims data to analyse and review the causes of claims and develop additional controls to help prevent future claims events. FARRG have agreed a contract with Cranfield University to use driver profiling to identify fire engine drivers who are at a higher risk of an incident. This allows training to be targeted towards those individuals to reduce operational risk. All FRAs have been invited to join FARRG regardless of whether they are part of the original insurance pool set up by the FTF project.

FRIC presented this project at the Emergency Services show in September 2016 to encourage other FRAs to join. The project was 'highly commended' in the Partnership

category of the 2016 Alarm Risk Awards and was subsequently shortlisted for the Public Finance Innovation Awards in 2017 under the category of 'Alternative Service Delivery Model'. The approach was adopted as best practice by the National Fire Chiefs Council in October 2017.

### *Savings position*

The net surplus for the first year of operation was £471,000, around £170,000 higher than the original predicted savings of £297,400 per year. The increased savings are mainly due to a lower than expected number of claims and partly due to improvement in motor claims reporting times. In October 2017, the entity had a surplus of £136,000 in its second year of operation, with the financial performance impacted by two property claims. The new pooling system remains on track to provide the forecast savings expected over the ten-year period.

Currently, the membership of FRIC remains at nine FRAs; however, FRIC would like additional FRAs to join and transition arrangements (such as cost neutral protection for two years) are in place to encourage additional members and greater savings for FRAs involved.

## Case study: Lancashire project 1

**Project description:** Converting a fire station to on-call crewing by providing an on-site accommodation block

**Project category:** Workforce

**FTF grant received:** £565,000

**Estimated ten-year total savings:** £3.1 million

**Completed:** March 2016

**Project objective:** Lancashire received a £565,000 FTF grant to provide on-site accommodation to allow Skelmersdale fire station to change to an on-call crewing model.

### *Overview*

Under the Day Crewing Plus model, firefighters work 12 positive hours and 12 on-call hours during each 24-hour shift. This allows fewer firefighters to be employed at a station, saving the FRA money, as well as providing increased income for the firefighters moving onto this shift pattern. As part of its Service Delivery Change Programme, Lancashire has adopted this model for a number of other stations in areas which experience low levels of demand in the evening. It has also provides savings of around £410,000 per year per station.

The project received £565,000 from the FTF which covered the total cost of the project. The project completed to schedule and the total cost of the project came in under budget at £520,100. The accommodation block was completed to a high standard and was recognised with a Bronze National Site Award under the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

No delays were experienced during the completion of this project. This was attributed to lessons learned from completing similar projects at other stations, such as allowing plenty of time for planning and setting up good formal and informal communication between the contractors, project manager and station manager. For this project, the planning application was ready to be submitted at the time of the bid and the project plan had been set out in advance. Station staff were kept informed of the progress and visits to previous projects took place to reflect upon and learn from previous projects.

### *Savings position*

The reduction of 14 members of staff has taken place as planned and therefore, if current staffing levels remain, the anticipated ten-year total savings estimate will be achieved.

## Case study: Northumberland

**Project description:** Relocating Hexham fire station to Hexham hospital to assist in response resilience, closer working with other emergency services, and allowing residential facilities for NHS Trust doctors during on-call emergency cover.

**Project category:** Building

**FTF grant received:** £912,000

**Estimated ten-year total savings:** £2.44 million

**Completed:** January 2017

**Project objective:** To move the existing fire station from Tyne Mills Industrial Estate to the Hexham General Hospital site. The aim was to modernise the facilities available to the fire service, increase resilience by moving the station out of the Hexham flood plain, provide a multi-agency command room, and allow greater collaborative working with other public services by being located on the hospital site. The project was undertaken in partnership with Northumbria Health Care Foundation Trust (NHCFT) and Northumberland County Council (NCC).

### *Overview*

Significant planning had already been undertaken at the time of the bid application. A project board and project team were in place and the project management methodology had been successfully used in previous projects by Northumberland FRA. This preparation allowed the planning permission application to proceed as soon as the bid was granted funding.

The original deadline for completion of the work was July 2015. However, in September 2015, when the first monitoring return was submitted, the deadline had been pushed back to August 2016. This was because the NCC framework contractor had gone into administration in February 2015 so the project had to start the procurement process again for a new contractor, delaying the project by around 12 months. Moving the completion date also allowed additional time for further consultation with stakeholders; at this point the project scope was extended to include the closure of Haydon Bridge fire station and co-locate NCC services at the new Hexham station. These decisions were based on fire operational response model changes and the decision to develop enhanced training

facilities. Further scope changes included housing NCC public protection staff at the new site to allow greater joint working and collaboration between fire, police and council staff. This change was implemented due to a senior management restructure within NCC which resulted in the responsibility for public protection moving under the Chief Fire Officer.

The project was completed and the station has been fully occupied since January 2017. Northumberland report that being located at Hexham fire station has improved community engagement due to an increase in the availability of facilities such as meeting rooms. A number of projects have been undertaken with community partners including Road Traffic Collision Awareness, Problem Solving Community Safety Hub meetings, council meetings, Victim Offender groups, community groups and young firefighter programmes, which would not have been possible on the previous site.

### *Savings position*

The extended scope of the project increased the total capital costs from £1,136,650 to £1,926,990; however, the level of FTF funding was fixed so the extra costs were met by NCC. The total savings for the project also increased from around £1.48 million to an estimated £2.44 million. The majority of these savings are estimated to be achieved through management and staffing efficiency measures.

## 4. Conclusions

Based on the monitoring returns received by the Home Office from the 36 FTF projects as of April 2017, ten of the projects had been completed and 55% of the £75m awarded had been spent.

There was a large variation across all 36 projects in terms of project aims and size, and the amount of funding received. Many projects included collaborative working with other blue light services and had also received funding from other sources, for example from police, ambulance and councils.

There was also a large variation in the estimated savings across all of the projects from around £457,000 to around £33 million. For some projects it was relatively straightforward to estimate savings, for example where savings were as a result of a reduction in the number of posts or the closing of fire stations. However, for others, calculating savings was more complex as it involved including savings to public services as a whole or through predicted declines in demand on the fire service or other services. Additionally, savings which were calculated through changes in demand are difficult to directly link to any one intervention, e.g. falling numbers of deliberate fires attended may be linked to a range of other factors including fire service intervention, poor weather conditions and additional afterschool activities. The savings set to be achieved from all of the projects between years ending 31 March 2016 and 2025 was £303m at April 2017, a small decline from the estimated £307m when the funding was awarded in April 2015.

Many projects had experienced problems, with very few running in line with the original timescales set out in April 2015. There was wide variation between different projects in terms of the length of delays experienced with some experiencing delays of several years.

Some categories of projects had experienced specific types of issues, for example many building projects were delayed due to issues around public consultation, identifying suitable sites and obtaining planning permission. Other issues that were common across all project categories included delays with the tendering processes or the procurement of services, and with IT systems.

For many projects, the original 12-month timescale for completion was ambitious and some delays were unforeseen and unavoidable; however, a stronger focus on identifying challenges and risks, and establishing clear project plans could be beneficial for any future schemes of this type.



# Appendix A: Overview of projects as of April 2017

FRA	Description	Category	Original end date	Current end date	Awarded (£)	Original savings (£)	Updated savings (£)
Avon	Merge two fire stations into one, including partial re-build and refurbishment of one.	Building	Jun 15	Apr 15	1,050,000	12,701,046	12,701,046
Bedfordshire	Review the existing system for on-call firefighters.	Workforce	Mar 17	Mar 18	308,000	959,535	765,906
Buckinghamshire	Create a new joint fire and police station by merging two old fire stations and a police site.	Building	Sep 16	Feb 19	2,840,687	5,385,168	5,385,168
Cambridgeshire	In collaboration with Bedfordshire and Devon & Somerset, develop a cloud-ready service for on-call fire fighter recruitment.	Workforce	Mar 16	Mar 18	1,445,000	4,588,261	3,000,000
Cheshire	Fund a Safety and Life Skills Centre to educate those most at risk of accidental death or injury, focusing on prevention and protection.	Prevention	May 16	Sep 17	1,947,500	5,423,622	5,423,622
Cleveland	Close three stations and replace with two new community fire stations; recruit 48 on-call firefighters and transition four appliances from whole time to on-call [overlap with workforce].	Building	Mar 19	Mar 18	2,800,000	23,657,404	23,643,394

FRA	Description	Category	Original end date	Current end date	Awarded (£)	Original savings (£)	Updated savings (£)
Cumbria	Create a new fire, ambulance and police centre, including a separate accommodation block for an on-call duty system [overlap with workforce].	Building	Jul 16	Mar 18	4,677,030	5,461,042	5,461,042
Derbyshire	Build a new joint police and fire headquarters.	Building	Oct 16	Nov 16	1,500,000	14,482,946	14,482,946
Devon & Somerset	Establish a procurement hub to build a national procurement capability, in collaboration with Kent and Essex.	Collaboration	Mar 21	Mar 25	374,100	27,118,447	27,118,447
Durham	Build joint emergency services building which will house police, fire, ambulance and the local Mountain Rescue Team.	Building	Feb 16	Apr 17	3,783,365	4,193,821	4,193,821
Essex	Lead a syndicate of nine FRAs to establish an insurance pooling arrangement open to all FRAs.	Collaboration	Oct 15	Oct 15	220,000	2,262,526	2,800,000
Greater Manchester – 1	A police, fire and ambulance prevention and protection collaboration to create ten multi-functional teams via an on-call payment model.	Workforce	Jun 15	Mar 16	3,730,240	38,492,587	31,289,000
Greater Manchester – 2	Project with Salford City Council to create four prevention hubs supporting young people.	Prevention	Mar 16	Jul 16	491,420	6,486,149	6,486,149
Hampshire – 1	New joint police and fire service headquarters, plus co-location at fire stations and fleet maintenance partnerships.	Building	Sep 16	Jun 17	2,597,628	9,926,423	9,926,423

FRA	Description	Category	Original end date	Current end date	Awarded (£)	Original savings (£)	Updated savings (£)
Hampshire – 2	Transform on-call services by using smaller early intervention vehicles and collaborating with ambulance services to attend more medical emergencies.	Workforce	Mar 16	Mar 18	1,392,385	2,351,875	2,351,875
Hereford & Worcester – 1	Merge existing stations, including collaboration with police to develop joint community safety initiatives and co-response with ambulance service.	Building	Mar 17	Dec 18	2,383,200	2,567,711	2,567,711
Hereford & Worcester – 2	Co-locate headquarter functions of police and fire services, with shared services.	Building	Sep 17	Mar 18	1,886,700	2,912,637	2,912,637
Hertfordshire	Collaboration with county council to relocate library services in four villages to on-call fire stations.	Building	Dec 16	Sep 18	700,000	893,632	2,130,500
Kent	A syndicate with West Sussex and West Yorkshire to upgrade the existing National Fire Service Emergency Cover Toolkit.	Toolkits	Project cancelled		350,000	2,582,805	-50,000
Lancashire – 1	Converting a fire station to on-call crewing by providing an on-site accommodation block.	Workforce	Mar 16	Mar 16	565,000	3,111,544	3,111,544
Lancashire – 2	Co-locate fire and ambulance services at a new fire station providing opportunity to develop a co-response scheme.	Building	Mar 16	Jan 18	2,437,500	8,133,180	7,490,528
London	Implement data transfer between fire, ambulance and police control rooms to support joint incidents.	Collaboration	Mar 16	Oct 17	763,290	1,386,637	1,386,637

FRA	Description	Category	Original end date	Current end date	Awarded (£)	Original savings (£)	Updated savings (£)
Merseyside	Merge seven fire stations into three to be shared with police and ambulance services. The three new sites will also have on-call firefighter crews [Overlap with workforce].	Building	Oct 16	Jan 19	4,468,500	22,747,254	18,878,165
North Yorkshire	Build a new efficient and more effective transport and logistics facility.	Building	Feb 16	May 17	2,422,539	2,665,476	2,665,476
Northamptonshire – 1	Replace current fire service incident command unit vehicle with new purpose-built vehicle jointly crewed by police and fire staff.	Collaboration	Mar 16	Sep 16	876,144	1,217,982	1,217,982
Northamptonshire – 2	Purchase joint rural response vehicles for police and fire. Expanding system for on-call firefighter arrangements to include Police Specials, volunteers and maximise new technology.	Collaboration	Mar 16	Aug 17	2,275,243	4,041,082	4,041,082
Northumberland	Relocate fire station to the hospital to assist in closer working and allow residence facilities for doctors on on-call emergency cover.	Building	Jul 15	Jan 17	912,000	1,476,208	2,441,460
Oxfordshire	In collaboration with Lincolnshire and Devon & Somerset, improve on-call firefighter recruitment and training.	Workforce	Jan 16	Mar 16	560,000	9,275,460	9,275,460
South Yorkshire	Co-locate fire and police station on the existing police site in Maltby.	Building	Jan 16	Aug 17	560,000	565,358	565,358
Staffordshire – 1	Open new joint fire station and ambulance service, also containing a Life Skills Centre.	Building	Jul 16	Feb 18	3,963,775	8,312,967	8,312,967

FRA	Description	Category	Original end date	Current end date	Awarded (£)	Original savings (£)	Updated savings (£)
Staffordshire – 2	Create Tri-Service Neighbourhood Service on the site of the existing fire station.	Building	Mar 16	Jun 17	1,175,000	1,488,058	1,488,058
Suffolk	Co-locate police, county council and ambulance services across seven building projects. (Also received funding from the Home Office's Police Innovation Fund.)	Building	Jun 17	Dec 18	4,943,356	9,249,173	12,110,000
Surrey – 1	Provide clinical and trauma training for all front line firefighters and install publicly accessible defibrillators at all Surrey fire stations in collaboration with ambulance service.	Collaboration	Mar 16	Nov 17	337,762	551,892	457,046
Surrey – 2	Develop new joint fleet management functions covering Surrey and Sussex fire, police and ambulance services.	Collaboration	Jul 16	Jul 21	5,955,636	20,288,179	20,300,000
Tyne & Wear	Co-locate police and fire at six fire stations.	Building	Jun 15	Mar 17	930,000	6,388,857	6,787,369
Warwickshire	Increase on-call firefighters and establish two new strategic locations.	Building	Mar 17	Sep 18	1,837,450	7,143,633	7,143,633
Wiltshire	Project to merge with Dorset FRA which includes: multi-agency strategic hub for education, changes to ICT infrastructure, and support for transitional arrangements.	Prevention	Apr 16	Jun 18	5,539,550	26,650,298	33,195,224
<b>Total</b>					<b>75,000,000</b>	<b>307,140,872</b>	<b>303,457,676</b>

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