



**NORTHUMBERLAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

***'CONSULTATION STRATEGY FOR RELOCATION OF  
HEXHAM COMMUNITY FIRE STATION'***

**4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

**Northumberland**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

4<sup>th</sup> July 2014

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## Foreword

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service has an excellent track record for the work it has done to improve community safety through prevention programmes and community engagement activities, whilst also still delivering a high performing and responsive emergency service.

During these difficult financial times we have to continue to adapt and innovate in order to ensure that we make the best use of limited financial resources, whilst still ensuring that we safeguard the quality and standards of such vitally important public services. As the Deputy Leader of the Council part of my 'portfolio' of services I am responsible for includes Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. Therefore with the Chief Fire Officer we are absolutely delighted to support this proposed development with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHNFT) & Hexham General Hospital (HGH), which is such an innovative way to provide a state of the art service to the community in Hexham and the surrounding area. The relocation of Hexham Community Fire Station (CFS) to the Hospital site by bringing these two public services together on an integrated facility helps reduce costs and secure efficiencies, offers the opportunity to provide modern up to date facilities to the benefit of the local community and staff, and will ensure we are well placed to continue to improve the services we provide to the local community through better and smarter ways of working.

We feel very passionately about the need to make sure that communities have the opportunity to shape and influence what happens in their local area. The consultation on the proposed development of a new Community Fire Station in Hexham provides an opportunity and demonstrates our commitment to work with local communities so that they have their say over important matters that affect them now and in the future. We will ensure that the feedback received from this consultation exercise is carefully considered and taken on board when deciding what the next steps should be.



Cllr Dave Ledger - Deputy Leader of Northumberland County Council



Alex Bennett – Chief Fire Officer

## **Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS): The re-location of Hexham CFS to HGH site as part of Northumberland County Council (NCC) Estates Transformation.**

### **Strategic Intent of Consultation**

- to find out what you think
- to identify your priorities and concerns
- to meet our statutory obligations

*We consult with communities and individuals using methods such as surveys by the internet and Council Website, email, response to phone calls, and drop in sessions. The consultation will also meet with principles with guidance issued by the Cabinet Office autumn 2012.*

This strategy with regard to consultation on relocation of Hexham CFS will be carried out through community engagement over an 8 week period and provide opportunity for input to the proposals. The four distinctive groups covered by the consultation are:

- Staff
- Local Groups and Communities
- Wider Groups In Hexham Area
- Key Stakeholders

**The Consultation period will be carried out for 9 weeks and commence on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and conclude on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014.**

In the overall Strategic context, The Fire and Rescue Service operates under the guidance of and is required to comply with national goals, values and vision. This is to support community cohesion and well-being and to provide a Fire & Rescue Service for stronger and prosperous communities. In Northumberland it is also part of the County Council and forms part of key service delivery. To serve the community we will demonstrate our commitment to these National objectives as detailed in:-

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004)
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework and inter-alia Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 – 2018 (May 2008)
- Rising to the Challenge: Improving Fire Service Efficiency (Dec 2008)
- National Framework Documents & Government Guidance that promote the joining up with other public and emergency services to secure performance improvements and/or reduce cost.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In June 2003 the Government produced a White Paper called “Our Fire and Rescue Service”. The paper set out the Government’s vision for the fire and rescue service of the future. It also set out how it will deliver that vision, make the service more efficient and effective and improve public safety. Furthermore, it also included proposals for changes to the structure and institutions of the service and the working practices and procedures of all those who work in the service.

The White Paper clearly establishes the fire service as forming part of the front-line response to natural disasters, such as flooding, and to terrorist incidents, but importantly also requires the service to undertake a more prominent and proactive role in the community, working in partnership with other agencies and services to improve safety and prevent emergency incidents happening in the first place. The Government has also produced legislation (Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004) to require this as a statutory duty.

In addition to this, the Authority is legally required to meet the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) which requires the Authority to provide and maintain a fire service resilient and able to provide a service, as a Category 1 responder. This requires fit for purpose buildings located in strategic localities on a 24 hour basis. In accordance with the requirement to support and resource the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) the location of the sites and provision of the facilities ensures the Authority and the Fire & Rescue Service is “Operationally Prepared” and meets with Governmental expectations.

As a result of the recent legislation, the responsibilities and expectations of fire authorities, throughout the country have grown and widened. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Authority (NFRA) accepts these responsibilities and strives to respond effectively to meet the expectations and the challenges this presents in delivering service in what is a ‘super sparse’ area, Northumberland being the most sparsely populated county in England.

In terms of the existing Hexham CFS previous consultation and planning approvals has presented the case and reason for necessary changes. The previous proposal was to move to West Point Hexham as it was identified through sequential appraisal to be the only viable option in re-locating the station at that time. However due to close partnership working between Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Northumberland County Council a more beneficial option has become available. This is to re-locate the CFS to the HGH site which has more operational benefits between the emergency services and also is better Value for Money (VFM) in terms of financial investment.

In addition to this, the Fire & Rescue Service, as part of NCC, supports the strategic aims of the Authority to provide improved service delivery in a more efficient and effective way. The Fire Service’s potential re-location to HGH is an integral part of the ‘Estates Transformation’ and ‘Depot Rationalisation’ in Hexham and West Northumberland. This is part of a wider project to rationalise and modernise the Council’s outdated depots and vehicle maintenance workshops in the Hexham area through the expansion of the existing depot facility at Tyne Mills Industrial Estate into a single ‘super depot’ by utilising the CFS at Tyne Mills.

**NFRS is under pressure to meet the modernisation agenda and to provide VFM with Efficiencies whilst improving the service delivered to people of Northumberland. This is in accordance with directives from the Government’s improvement agenda under the National Framework Documents and the subsequent need to improve the way NFRS delivers its service.**

The service provided must include a balanced strategy based on the fundamental principles of prevention, protection and response and to be resilient. Therefore in principle, the main driver for understanding these proposals is the requirement to improve the safety of the community served by NFRS based on its Fire & Rescue Plan (FRP) and Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) risk mapping.

***Key to the proposal are opportunities arising out of NFRS being part of Northumberland County Council and the move to ‘Improved Public Services’ by closer working with Northumbria Healthcare on key services and interoperability and where possible shared facilities. With the move to HGH and supporting ‘Depot Rationalisation at Hexham’ NFRS can achieve its essential service delivery whilst;***

**Improving Community Service & Service Delivery  
Providing Modern ‘Fit for Purpose’ Facilities  
Co-location & joining up of Emergency Services  
Improved efficiency & Value for Money**

**People  
Premises  
Locality  
VFM**

The main drivers for Improvements to the service delivered by NFRS are;

- Improve community safety by prevention;
- Interoperability and joined up working;
- Provide a balance between prevention and intervention;
- Base Fire Cover provision on FSEC Risk Mapping and risks to the community;
- Identified improvements through Fire & Rescue Plan;
- Develop our commitment to community safety activities;
- Drive the occurrence of fires and other incidents to as low a level as reasonably practicable;
- Develop strategies and joint training for other risks such as Road Traffic Collisions;
- Deliver efficiencies in conjunction with NCC;
- Replace outdated buildings with purpose built facilities for staff and the community;
- Increase potential for partnership working;
- Ensure Resilience and Operational Preparedness.

Whilst the original improvements to NFRS came through the provision of community fire stations in the South East of Northumberland, the next phase for essential improvements in strategically identified key area of Northumberland includes Hexham CFS in conjunction with the Depot Rationalisation for service delivery which includes;

- Provision of permanent premises for the Community Safety Academy;
- Provision of Community Safety facilities in the West of the county.

## **2.0 NFRS PROPOSAL**

### **2.1 Background**

The existing site and station at Hexham is in poor condition and utilises temporary portacabins which lack the necessary modern facilities the Fire Service requires to meet its operational needs and other statutory duties. There is also the opportunity to deliver services through a joined up approach with Northumbria Healthcare & HGH and supporting other parts of the County Council to provide modern facilities within available budgets and to make sustainable efficiencies.

It is proposed to relocate the existing station to a new facility on HGH site. This is to utilise existing buildings at the rear of the site through alterations and extension to provide the necessary fit for purpose facilities. This would be achieved by close working with Northumbria Healthcare and HGH. It is planned that the facilities which are currently accommodated in the buildings will be transferred to the main hospital building or elsewhere on the site and there will be no impact on the day-to-day running of the hospital. The facilities would provide necessary operational requirements whilst also providing for Community Safety requirements. The financial cost is significantly less than moving to West Point and building a bespoke new CFS, with the land at West Point being available for sale by NCC.

Key is the releasing of the existing Tyne Mills Fire Station site to allow Local Services to expand its adjoining operational depot to create a 'Super Depot' at Tyne Mills and free up other property and rationalise buildings occupied by NCC.

### **2.2 Community Fire Station Specifics**

The new CFS will be designed to meet operational needs of a modern fire service with modern facilities to;

- Provide modern efficient and proportionate accommodation;
- Accommodation to be 'fit for purpose' for a modern Emergency Service;
- Shared site and building with HGH to reduce premises costs and improve interoperability to support Service Delivery;
- Improved Community facilities and service interaction with customers and the community.

The new aspect of the joint community fire station will have two appliance bays, a separate garage, tower and firehouse with drill yard (firehouse is for simulated training and not real fire). In each case the main building will extend to two floors and house operational staff access for partners and provide welfare and general office accommodation. Dedicated parking for staff and visitors (including disabled parking spaces).

From the new station we aim to provide a cost effective, good quality, strategically planned, range of services to the residents of the town and neighbouring rural populations, the commercial and farming sectors, and visitors to Hexham and West Northumberland areas. The services will include:

- A comprehensive range of prevention strategies for community safety;
- Provision of facilities to support community engagement and partnership working;
- Suitable and appropriate facilities for members of the public and employees of Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service;
- An emergency response facility combined with community safety training/advice and support;
- Provide enhanced training facilities to provide better range of training delivery for Fire-fighters and Youth courses.

### 2.3 Option & Opportunity

In considering and addressing the required upgrade or renovation of Hexham Fire Station the following table gives a summary of the options considered by the Fire and Rescue Authority following identification of options for essential modernisation:-

No.	Option	Viable	Desirable	Achievable
1	Do nothing.	x	x	✓
2	Build new CFS at West Point.	x	✓	x
3	Provide a new CFS by altering existing buildings on HGH site.	✓	✓	✓

The key issues in respect of each option are set out below:-

No	Option	Issue
1	Do nothing.	The existing fire station building at Hexham is deteriorating and deficient in facilities. They are unfit for purpose and do not meet FRS needs. Failure to meet Disability and Youth Safety issues. By not relocating Local Services will not be able to achieve Estates Transformation for its Local Services depot and vehicle maintenance workshop facilities in the Hexham area.
2	Build new CFS at West Point.	This option would provide new CFS at Hexham but is not viable due to budget restrictions and comparison to the HGH VFM option.
3	Provide a new CFS by altering and adapting existing buildings on HGH site.	This option would provide new community fire station with modern 'fit for purpose' facilities including community safety facilities and joined up working and interoperability with HGH. This also has the advantage of providing best value for the public finances as efficiencies and reduced overheads which would be realised through co-location. NCC & Local Services can implement Depot Rationalisation and create a 'Super Depot' by redeveloping the existing Tyne Mills depot site to encompass the vacated Fire Station site at Tyne Mills. Release of Land at West Point. Locating the Community Fire Station in the centre of Hexham.

## 2.4 Operational Prevention, Protection & Response

The CFS will be located central to Hexham whilst providing essential Fire & Rescue Emergency Services under its Statutory Duty and also other duties to Hexham & its Station Area Figure 1 & 2;

- Community Safety and Prevention duties;
- Fire Cover to Hexham and **surrounding Station area**;
- Emergency cover for road traffic collisions on A69 and other roads in station area;
- Specialist response to wildfire, floods, chemical incidents and other incidents;
- Youth and other vulnerable groups engagement;
- Partnership and collaborative arrangements.

This option will provide the Council and Community and Fire and Rescue Service with improved training, domestic, community safety and office facilities in the rural areas. It will be able to control access to the fire safety facilities and the type of advice that is provided.

The successful delivery of the integration and new facilities is regarded as a key element in achieving the NCC & Fire and Rescue Authority's vision. The CFS and joined up working with HGH will provide benefit to residents, workers and employers in these areas of the County.

The benefits of this option can be summarised as follows: -

- Allowing the Fire Authority to progress its agenda for improvement;
- Incorporating custom built facilities in a new CFS to specifically address the fire safety and prevention agenda;
- Providing better VFM in the operation of the service;
- Challenging public perception of the fire and rescue service as only an emergency response service;
- Ensuring that the community is protected from fires and other emergencies, in a fair and equitable manner, through appropriate utilisation of prevention, protection and intervention measures;
- Providing appropriate accommodation and facilities for staff in order to maximise their contribution towards the achievement of the fire and rescue authority's vision.
- Improved accessibility of the CFS to local residents through existing public transport links and car parking provision associated with HGH.

**The strategically located community fire stations Figure 1 will link with those already operating in the south east of the County to form a network of installations providing modern facilities for improving safety in the community and responding to any emergency situations that may arise working through interoperability with Northumbria Healthcare & NCC through creation of the 'Super Depot'.**

Figure 1 Key Strategic Community Fire Stations NFRS

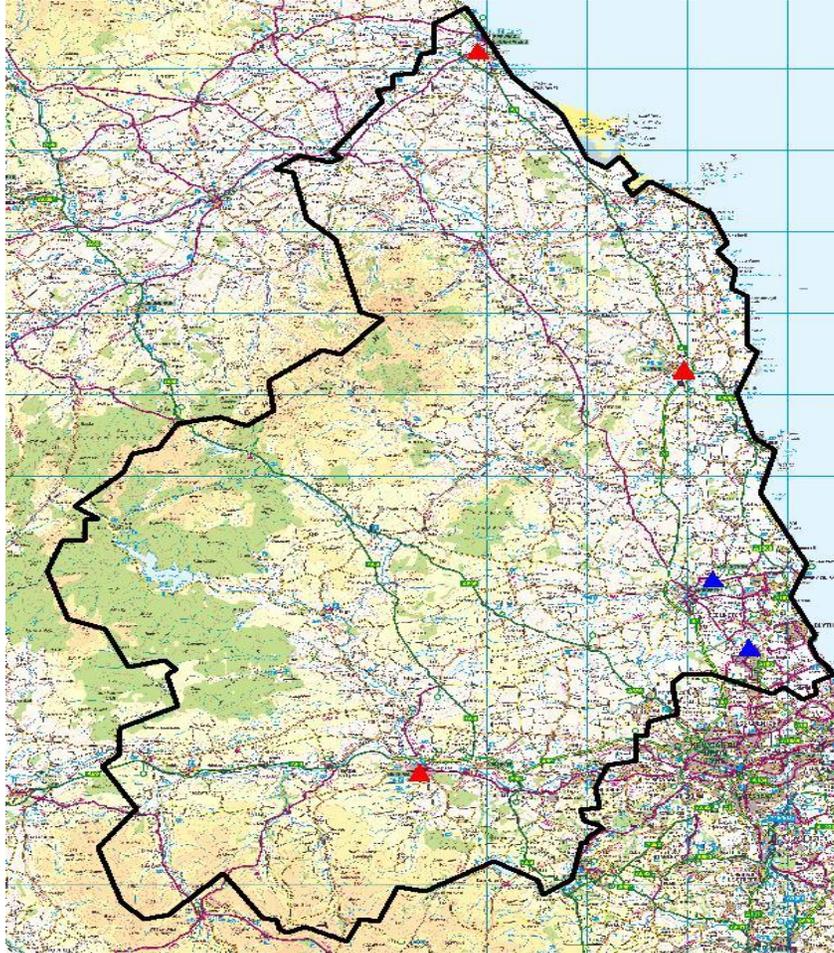


Figure 2 Hexham Station Area of Response

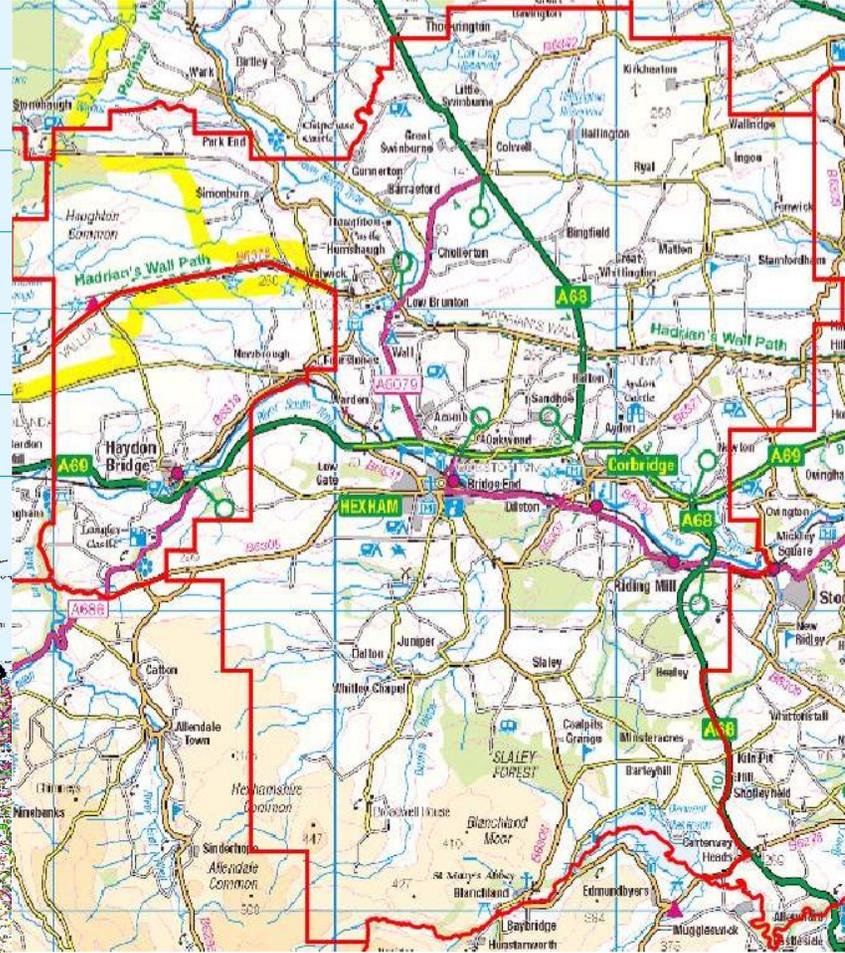


Figure 3 Location of the Proposed New CFS (highlighted in red)

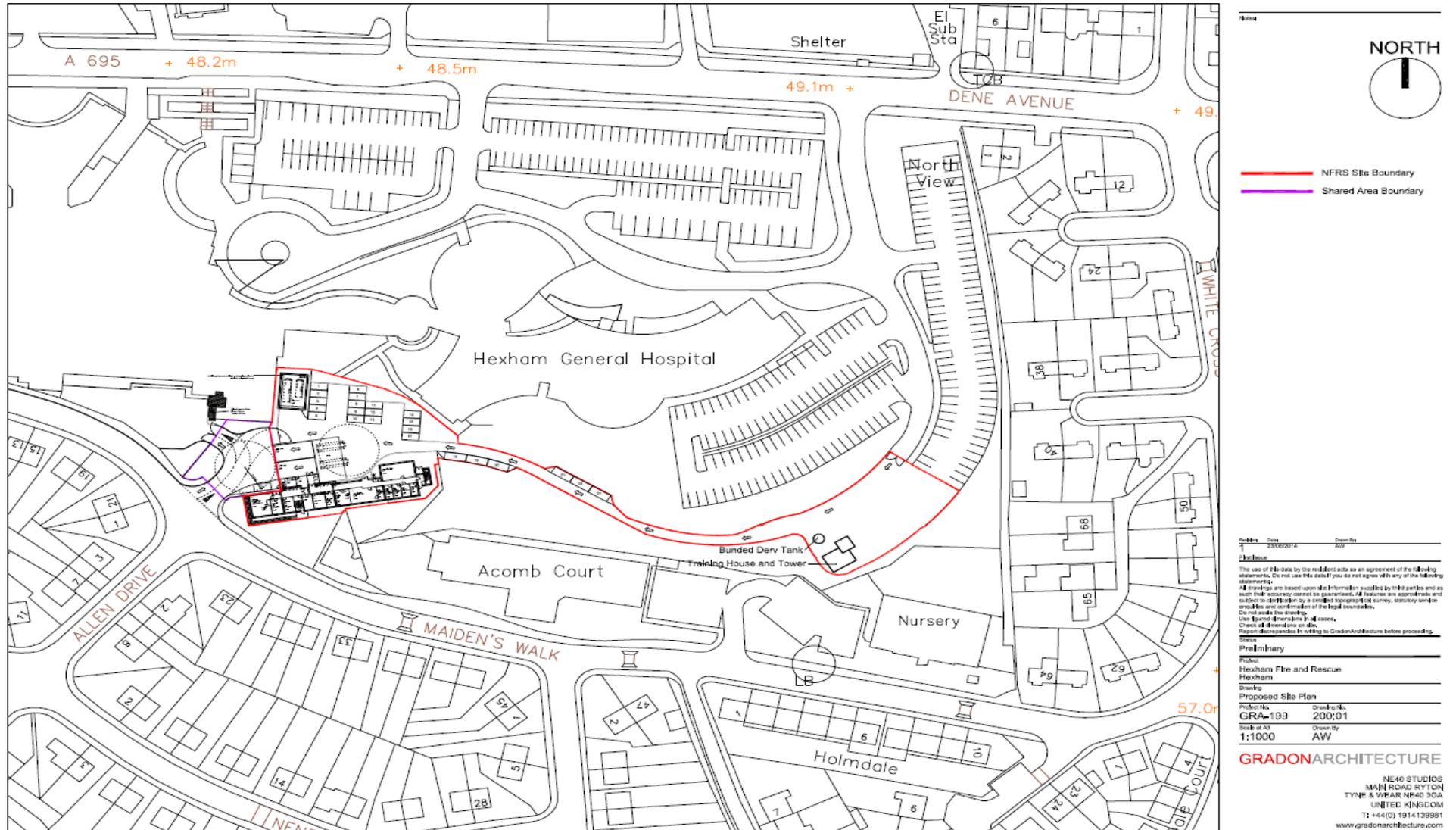


Figure 4 Digital Impression of the Proposed New CFS





## 2.5 Review of Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC)

In reviewing the necessary requirements for Northumberland with regard to the Fire Service and part of regular work under the 'Fire & Rescue Plan' the service is committed in meeting the modernisation agenda and improve facilities and services through its modernisation programme and when opportunity exists.

With the opportunity to provide essential modern facilities as a shared facility with the County Council the FSEC model has been used to carry out an Emergency Cover Risk Assessment. In reviewing relocation and the risk to the community the service can assess the impact on 'life risk' by moving location of the station and calculating risk factors through nationally applied and approved model.

With the FSEC review in respect to the relocation of Hexham Station the results of the 'risk profile' remain fundamentally the same, Figures 5 & 6. In reviewing the other areas of Hexham Station response area this demonstrates that by relocating Hexham Station has no effect on the predicted risk level.

### Risk Levels

✓ +	Well Above Average
✓ +	Above Average
✓ +	Average
✓ +	Below Average
✓ +	Well below average

Risk Level	Risk of Death
Well Above Average	Greater than or equal to 1 in 50000
Above Average	Greater than or equal to 1 in 100000 but less than 1 in 50000
Medium	Greater than 1 in 151515 but less than 1 in 100000
Below Average	Greater than 1 in 200000 but less than 1 in 151515
Well Below Average	Less than 1 in 200000

The risk levels are set by national modelling and in conjunction to previous statistical data of incidents and population levels.

Figure 5 FSEC MODEL HEXHAM EXISTING TYNE MILLS COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

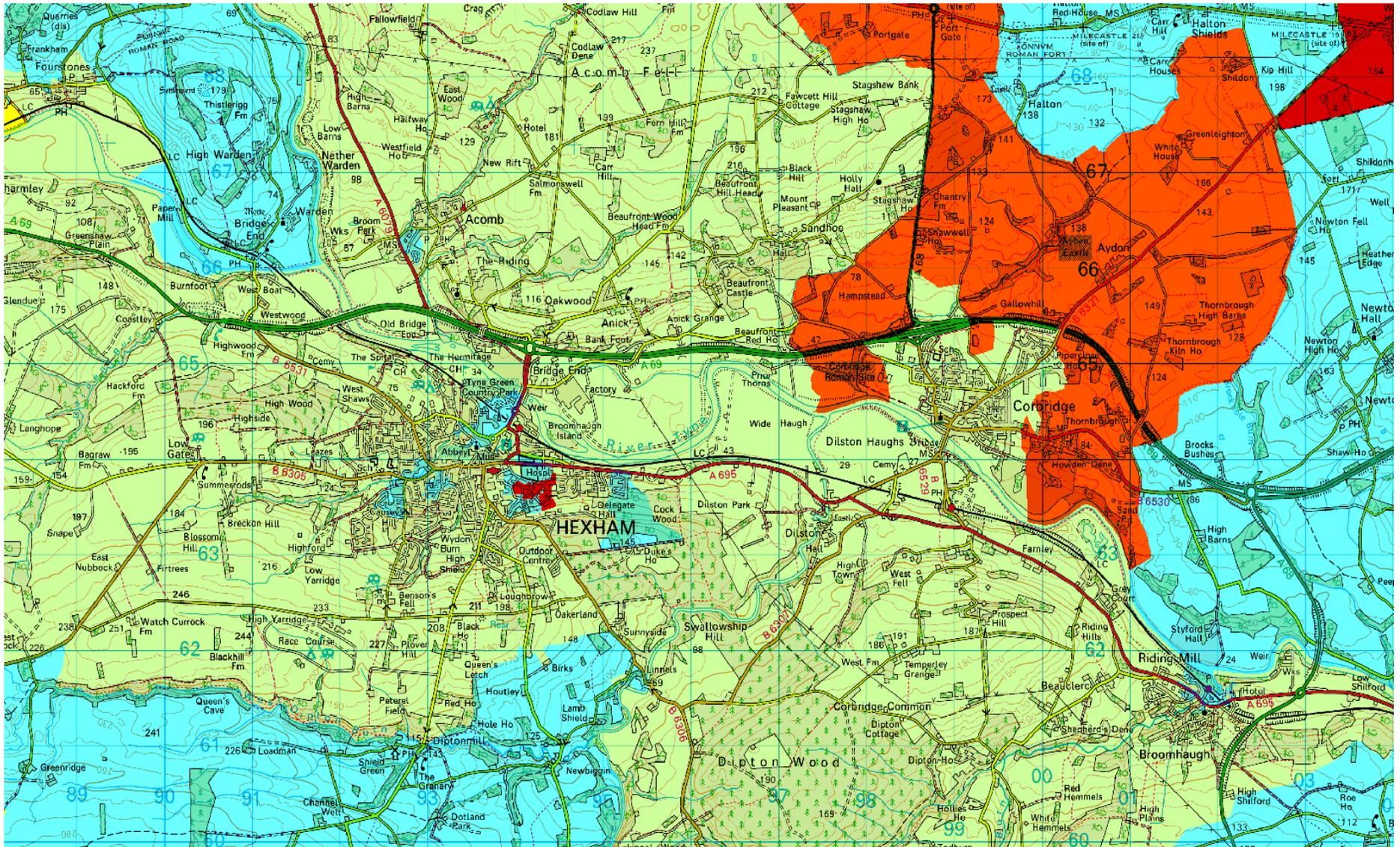
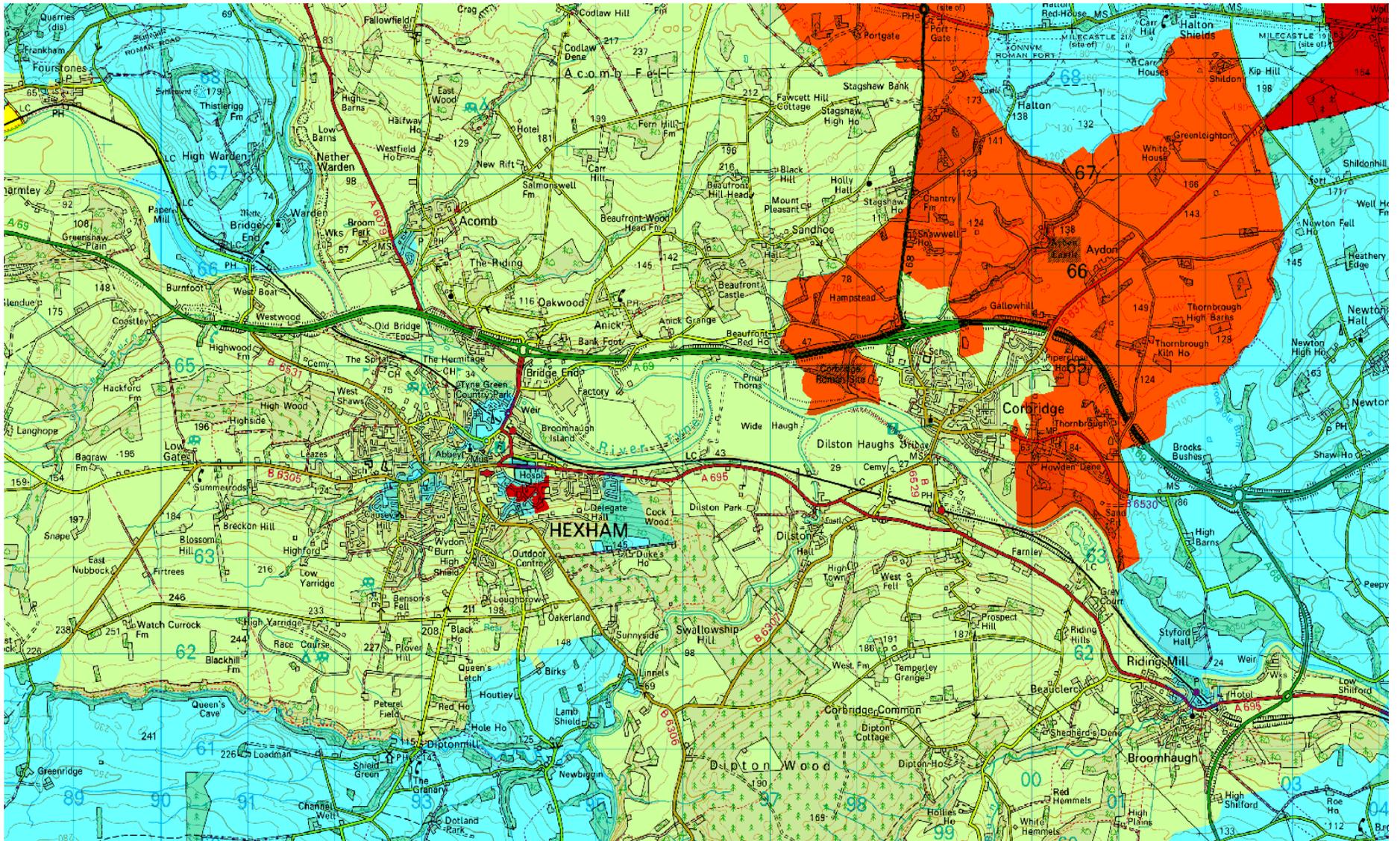


Figure 6 FSEC MODEL HEXHAM PROPOSED RELOCATION TO HEXHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL



### 3.0 THE CONSULTATION

The purpose of the consultation is to enable the Fire and Rescue Authority to identify and confirm the strategic proposal in the relocation to HGH is acceptable to and meets the needs of the community. Also to consider any options which are soundly based on evidence, and that these options are considered taking account of the views, concerns, and knowledge and experience of those affected by them, and that solutions can be fully considered, and where appropriate, adapted.

The Consultation Overview;

1. To assist NFRS Management Team to meet their statutory and moral obligations with regards to consultation in relation to Hexham CFS relocation proposal;
2. To provide consultation advice, guidance and support to Councillors, the CFO and Management of NFRS;
3. To meet with the vision of NCC and provide feedback to Depot Rationalisation Group;
4. To ensure the final proposal is fully informed by staff, communities and stakeholders.

**The nominated Consultation Champion (co-ordinator) is DCFO Paul Hedley.**

The chart below sets out the key roles:

Project Role	Responsible Person
Executive Member	Deputy Leader NCC Cllr Dave Ledger
Project Sponsor	CFO Alex Bennett
Project Director	DCFO Paul Hedley
Project Manager	Neill Cook
Operational Support Officers	Group Manager NFRS Lee Buckingham
NHNFT Liaison	Paul Brayson
Consultation Support	Kirsten Francis & Neil Easton

It is proposed that the Project Consultation will follow NCC Policy & Cabinet Office Guidelines which will be managed by team, which enables all consultation documentation to be made freely available to managers. The web site will be utilised as a key method to present information during the consultation period.

This will include;

- **Pre Consultation Work June 2014**
- **Commencement of Consultation 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014**
- **Consultation Engagement 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014**
- **Closure of Consultation 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014**
- **Review and Monitor and Final Report to Consultation Champion 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014**
- **Final Evaluation and Report issued to FRS Senior Officers 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014**
- **Final Evaluation available on NCC/NFRS web-site 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014**

#### **4.0 CONSULTATION AIMS**

NFRS as part of NCC and under scope of modernisation of the Fire Service and supporting Depot Rationalisation will raise awareness and understanding of the relocation of Hexham CFS and NFRS & NCC Strategic Aims, and its role in contributing to the prevention of injuries and deaths, and driving down risk in the communities of Hexham, Tyne Valley and Northumberland:-

- The service will ensure service personnel understand how the changes will impact upon them;
- NCC will ensure consultation is good quality, provides value for money, and presents in a professional and efficient manner;
- NCC will provide opportunities for members of the community and personnel to contribute to the development of the project with regard to NFRS based on evidence and information provided;
- NFRS & NCC will demonstrate that they have taken into account the views and concerns of all its stakeholders and allowed their knowledge and experience to influence the decision-making process;
- To meet with the Code of Practice Consultation (2012);
- To ensure that the consultation on NFRS Strategic Improvements to NFRS are kept separate to the Planning Applications;
- To ensure that the proposals serve the needs of Northumberland in maximising Community Well-Being by supporting Partnership working whilst meeting Efficiencies;
- To address the consensus view of staff, stakeholders and the community and incorporate these in the proposed plans.

## 5.0 CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

NFRS Consultation will support NFRS officers and will use clear lines of communication and transparent dialogue:

- Carry out Pre-Consultation with identified public/bodies prior to website launch and press release 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014;
  - Northumbria Healthcare & HGH
  - Staff
  - Key Political Members
  - Hexham Town and Local Parish Councils
  - Key partners/stakeholders
  - Community Forums
  - MP
  - NCC Departments
  - Executive Directors of NCC
  
- To meet criteria of Code of Practice for Engagement with the community the following will be covered;
  - Consult widely throughout the process, allowing 8 weeks for written consultation.
    - Pre-consultation
    - Start formal 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014
    - Conclusion formal consultation 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014
  - Be clear about proposals, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
  - Ensure that consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
    - NCC Website & E-mail Facility
    - Press Release
    - Letters to Key Stakeholders
    - Leaflets to local residents
    - Local Residents Drop in sessions at HGH 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014 - 14:00 to 16:00 & 18:00 to 20:00
    - Public Drop in sessions Hexham Community Fire Station 11<sup>th</sup> July 2014 - 14:00 to 16:00 & 12<sup>th</sup> July 2014 - 10:00 to 12:00
    - Presentation to Area Committee 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014
    - Presentation to Town Council to be agreed
    - Presentation to Parish Councils [upon request]
  - Use NCC Policy and Research Team to produce bespoke survey material

- Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
  - Individual to letters/phone/e-mail
  - Response to requested groups
  - Final Press Release
- Monitor effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation support officer.
  - Use of NCC Communications & Marketing to confirm approach and advise through process
  - DCFO Paul Hedley as NFRS Consultation Champion
- Consult with staff and Rep Bodies immediately affected and also all other staff;
  - Station
  - Area
  - Service

### 5.1 Key engagements are as follows:

Set up Consultation Group and set project group meetings

Pre Consultation Staff & Managers

CFO to speak to key Cllr's & Senior Officers NCC

CFO to speak to key Managers Northumbria Healthcare & HGH

Press release liaison NCC & Northumbria Healthcare

Issue press release to relevant publications

Issue of correspondence to Rep Bodies

Issue letter from CFO to Councillors (NCC, Town & Parish), MP etc.

Web base information and survey in place on NCC website

Initial full staff briefings at affected stations

Contact and meetings with existing community partners

Leaflet drop local residents	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2014
Presentation to Town Council	TO BE ARRANGED
Presentation Area Committee	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2014
Drop in meeting for local residents at HGH	23 <sup>rd</sup> July HGH 14:00 to 16:00 18:00 to 20:00
Drop in meeting for general public at Hexham CFS Tyne Mills	11 <sup>th</sup> July Fire Station 14:00 to 16:00 12 <sup>th</sup> July Fire Station 10:00 to 12:00
Issue letter to Hexham Business Community	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2014
Presentations to Parish Councils at scheduled meetings	As requested following correspondence
CFO letters to Area Partnerships/Stakeholders	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2014

## 6.0 CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

A log will be maintained throughout the process registering feedback from all channels during the consultation period. A log of all contacts made during the consultation period will also be maintained along with an action log detailing responses to specific feedback and amendments made to policy as a result of the consultation feedback.

### Prior to 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 – Preliminary Consultation

- Run preliminary consultation with identified political leaders and other groups in accordance with section 9.0.
- Schedule all consultation meetings / determine number/ dates / location / officers in attendance and draft letters ready for sending out (as appropriate).
- Draft press release, web page content, posters and leaflets and agree where and when to distribute.

- Draft questionnaire and confirm content.
- Prepare consultation document, agree content and print.

**From 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014 – Primary Consultation**

- 9 week consultation period begins in accordance with section 10.0 and document is made available for distribution.
- Web page to go Live 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and also for 9 week period with final report.
- Publish address, e-mail and telephone contact points along with Questions.
- Press release made available to local media.
- Meetings to be held with: (staff, and other stakeholders).
- Communications & Policy Team NCC will make information available through web page.

## 7.0 PUBLIC

### Priority

<b>MP &amp; MEP</b>
<b>Executive Members</b>
<b>Councillors (County, Town, Parish)</b>
<b>Representatives</b>
<b>Local Residents</b>
<b>Hexham General Hospital &amp; NHCT</b>
<b>Public</b>
<b>Staff</b>
<b>Partner/Stakeholder Agencies</b>
<b>LMAP</b>
<b>NSP</b>
<b>Community Forum</b>
<b>NCC Departments</b>
<b>Voluntary Community</b>
<b>Business</b>

### General

<b>Public (unaffected)</b>
<b>Community/Voluntary organisations</b>
<b>Staff (unaffected)</b>
<b>Partner Agencies (unaffected)</b>
<b>Business (unaffected)</b>

## 8.0 EQUALITY STATEMENT

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and Community Safety aims to ensure that all staff, visitors and members of the community are treated with equal respect in an environment free from prejudice and harassment.

In all aspects of service delivery and employment no individual or group will be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, marital status, age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, trade unions activity, family responsibilities or unrelated criminal convictions.

We also value diversity and will achieve this through the organisation's role as:

- Employer
- Provider of services
- Purchaser of services
- Working with partner agencies

***The accessibility and provision of information, in accordance with Equalities Act 2010, and any opportunities provided for communication should take into account the diverse needs and requirements of citizens throughout the implementation of this strategy.***

The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed through the process and may be amended to reflect issues raised.

## 9.0 KEY MESSAGES

### 9.1 SOCIETAL

- The Fire and Rescue Service is improving its role to enhance the safety of the public;
- The Fire and Rescue Service is improving its ability to respond to emergencies.
- The introduction of Community Fire Stations will improve the Service's interaction to the community and ultimately increase the level of protection to the public;
- A reduction in the number of fire fatalities and injuries from fire can only be reduced further by increased preventative work provided by these proposals;
- The new Community Fire Stations will provide accessible modern facilities closer to the more rural areas of the County;
- The Service aims to target its resources to the areas of greatest risk and ensure that its risk prevention strategies are tailored to meet the needs of the most vulnerable within our society;
- By broadening its role within the community and introducing Community Fire Stations the Service will create new and rewarding employment and development opportunities for existing and potential staff;
- The facilities at the new Community Fire Stations will also be available for use by the members of the community and our partner organisations to promote and support public safety in general, in keeping with the wider agenda for social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and crime reduction.

### 9.2 TECHNOLOGICAL

- The Fire and Rescue Authority intend to develop and enhance its risk assessment methodology to plan and support the future rationalisation of its response to emergency incidents;
- By making full use of the available technology the Service will be able to gain a better understanding of the factors which influence causes and trends of emergency incidents and types of risk in local communities. This will also facilitate and support collaborative and partnership working arrangements.

### **9.3 ENVIRONMENTAL**

- There are clear benefits associated with replacing old and outdated fire stations with a modern built environmentally efficient Community Fire Stations in Hexham;
- By actively engaging in additional social inclusion activities the Service seeks to contribute to the reduction in anti-social behaviour leading to a safer society, as a direct result of improved inter-agency and community working using the stations as a focal point;
- By providing the purpose built Community Fire Station providing same resources as in existing site maintains operational cover for Hexham Area.

### **9.4 ECONOMIC**

- As part of the county council ensure services are provided to meet Statutory Requirements and also provide VFM, facilities on the site at HGH and supporting Depot Rationalisation creating NCC Efficiencies.

### **9.5 LEGAL**

- Changing the focus of the Service, by putting prevention before intervention, is as the core of the improvement agenda for the Fire and Rescue Service.
- The new Community Fire Station will also assist the Fire and Rescue Authority to meet its statutory duties in relation to Community Safety and the Crime and Disorder Act.

## 9.6 POLITICAL

- Shared services and interoperability between NFRS & Northumbria Healthcare;
- Support NCC Depot Rationalisation Strategy and Services in the Hexham area;
- Fire & Rescue Plan is all to do with shifting the planning focus to put people first and the introduction of risk reduction and risk management strategies, as opposed to cutting costs;
- It is not about prevention at the expense of front line emergency response but is essentially a fully integrated risk-based approach to community safety, fire safety legislation and enforcement and emergency response arrangements that will contribute to a safer society;
- This is not an issue of reduction, rather one of better use of available resources **in order to reduce the risk to the public.** Any proposed changes to current arrangements will be based on risk-assessment and empirical evidence;
- The Fire and Rescue Authority regard the provision of these Community Fire Station as fundamental to its strategy of ensuring that it has the right resources in the right place at the right time;
- This strategy further supports the Governments vision for a modern and efficient Service designed to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which is set out in the White Paper 'Our Fire and Rescue Service' and also The Fire and Rescue Service Act;
- The primary consideration of the Fire and Rescue Authority is the health and safety of the public and its employees. Health and Safety will not be compromised under any circumstances;
- The new Community Fire Station further develops the use of shared facilities with opportunities for enhanced collaboration and co-operation.

## 9.7 ETHICAL

- As a public body, the Fire and Rescue Authority have both a statutory and moral duty to provide an efficient and effective Fire and Rescue Service which provides value for money;
- The Fire and Rescue Authority regards the protection of the public from the dangers resulting from fires and other emergencies as its highest priority.

10.0 PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION

Stakeholder(s)	Method of Consultation	Responsibility
<b>Elected Members</b>	Telephone briefing followed up with letter with briefing note <b>(Portfolio Holder, Policy Board &amp; Local Cllr's Hexham Area)</b>	Chief Fire Officer
<b>Member of Parliament</b>	Phone call & Letter	Chief Fire Officer
<b>Fire Service Unions</b>	Briefing	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
<b>Staff at Hexham</b>	Face to Face & Briefing Note from Group Manager	Group Manager
<b>All other FRS staff</b>	E-mail with Briefing Note.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
<b>Town &amp; Parish Councils</b>	Phone Call & Letter offering presentation <b>(In Hexham Station Area)</b>	Chief Fire Officer
<b>Chair West Area Committee</b>	Phone call & Letter	Chief Fire Officer
<b>NCC Departments</b>	E-mail to Heads of Service and briefing note with offer of meetings and team briefings.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
<b>Executive Directors</b>	Phone Call & Briefing.	Chief Fire Officer

11.0 PRIMARY CONSULTATION Commencement from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014

Stakeholder(s)	Method of Consultation	Date/ Timescale	Responsibility
<b>Elected Members (Fire Authority)</b>	E-mail and briefing paper & briefings;	Week 1 - 3	Chief Fire Officer
<b>Elected Members (Other)</b>	Consultation leaflet with covering e-mail and questionnaire.	Week 1 – 3	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
<b>Public</b>	Local residents with leaflet drop and open session for residents to attend and ask questions. Press Release. Policy Team Survey through website.	Week 1 – 9 Drop in session HGH 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 14:00 – 16:00 and 18:00 – 20:00	Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Group Manager
<b>General Public</b>	Press Release. Policy Team Survey through website. Drop in session Hexham Fire Station.	Week 1 & later Week 1 – 9 Fire Station Drop in 11 <sup>th</sup> July 14:00 to 16:00 12 <sup>th</sup> July 10:00 to 12:00	NCC Coms Support  Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Group Manager
<b>Town &amp; Parish Councillors Hexham Area</b>	Attendance.	Week 1 – 5 On request	Principal & Group Manager
<b>Area Committee West</b>	Attendance Meeting.	8 <sup>th</sup> July	Principal & Group Manager

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Method of Consultation</b>	<b>Date/ Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Representative Bodies: FBU, RFU, FOA.</b>	Invitation to meeting and presentation.	Week 1 - 4	Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Assistant Chief Fire Officer
<b>Station Staff</b>	Regular Briefings.	Week 1-9	Group Manager
	Website.	Week 1-9	Support
<b>Community and Voluntary Organisations</b>	Consultation leaflet with covering letter.	Week 2	Support
<b>LMAP</b>	Consultation leaflet with covering letter. Attendance at LMAP	Week 2 To be arranged	Support Group Manager
<b>Local Business through Chamber of Trade</b>	Consultation leaflet with covering letter.	Week 2 – 4	Support
<b>Other Interested Parties: NEAS, Police, Cat 1 &amp; 2 CC Responders</b>	Consultation Document with covering letter.	Week 2 – 4	Support
<b>Public &amp; Community Groups</b>	Open Session Hexham Fire Station, 2 presentations on proposals	Week 2 – 4	Group Manager & Support

## 12.0 REVIEW & MONITORING

The consultation will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that information is relevant and available. There will also be a response to those who request a response to the proposals.

## 13.0 REPORT

At the end of the consultation process, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014, there will be a review of findings to inform decisions with a final report to be published on the County Council Website.

## 14.0 CONTACT DETAILS

**E-mail** [fireconsult@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:fireconsult@northumberland.gov.uk)  
**Letters** **DCFO Paul Hedley**  
**Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service**  
West Hartford Headquarters & Community Fire Station  
West Hartford Business Park,  
Cramlington,  
NE23 3JP

### Contact Centre

**Phone: 0845 600 6400**  
**Text phone: 01670 620158**  
**Text relay: 18001 0845 600 6400**

**Opening hours: we are open Monday to Friday from 7am - 8pm and Saturday 9am to 3pm (excluding bank holidays).**

**Please note: between 7am and 8.30am, 5pm and 8pm and on Saturdays we offer a reduced level of service.**

**Out of hours emergency: we provide a reduced service for emergency calls only outside these hours on 0845 600 6400**

**Please note: the cost of contacting the Council on 0845 telephone number can vary depending on your service provider and will cost more if you are using a mobile telephone.**

If you need this information in Large Print, Braille, Audio or in another format or language please contact us:-

Telephone	0845 600 6400
Fax	01670 714602
Typetalk	018001 0845 600 6400
Email	<a href="mailto:ask@northumberland.gov.uk">ask@northumberland.gov.uk</a>