

Darren Dovey  
Chief Fire Officer  
Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service

25 March 2020

Dear Darren,

### **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INSPECTION REVISIT**

Between 2 to 5 March 2020, we conducted our second revisit to Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service. We did this to review progress against your action plan.

2. The focus of our revisit was on the areas that we had identified as being in the greatest need of improvement. These were set out in the two causes of concern in your service's inspection report published on 20 June 2019. They related to the service's:

- (a) fire engine availability and the process for managing this; and
- (b) process for assuring itself that its firefighters had all necessary safety critical skills needed to respond to emergency incidents.

3. I am pleased to report that overall Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has made positive progress in relation to the causes of concern that we identified. The service has treated making the necessary improvements as a priority. I have summarised our findings below.

4. The service has produced detailed action plans with specific action owners. There are effective governance arrangements within the service and through the police, fire and crime commissioner to scrutinise progress.

5. We recognise what the service has done to produce better performance data and management information. Managers at all levels we interviewed showed a thorough understanding of this information. This understanding has assisted decision-making and the prioritisation of improvement activity.

6. The tangible improvements we saw have mitigated the risks to public safety that we identified in our original inspection. The measures that the service have introduced to improve fire engine availability are proving effective, with greater availability than when we first inspected. Recent data you provided shows the minimum number of fire engines needed is being achieved between 95 percent and 99 percent of occasions, a vast improvement from the time of our

inspection. New working practices are becoming established which should ensure greater ongoing fire engine availability.

7. Staff are now up to date with safety-critical training and we are encouraged by the systems being put in place by the service to monitor training. We found station managers monitor training and competence records to ensure compliance and take action when needed.

8. In light of the improvements made, we don't propose to carry out any further revisits on these causes of concern. We will continue to monitor progress through updates from the service and data returns. When we next inspect the service, we will further assess progress against these recommendations. This letter will be published on our website and I will discuss our findings in greater detail with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zoë Billingham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'Z' and 'B'.

**Zoë Billingham**

HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services

HM Inspector of Constabulary