Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Authority

Statement of Assurance 2025-2026



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Gloucestershire
Fire and Rescue Service
Working together for a safer Gloucestershire

Contents

1. Introduction and joint foreword 3

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2025-26 4

Strategic Aim: People 4

Strategic Aim: Prevention and Protection 7

Prevention 7

Protection 9

Strategic Aim: Response and Resilience 10

3. Service performance in 2025-26 12

Performance processes 12

Performance overview at year end 13

4. Main legal and statutory responsibilities 14

5. Governance and assurance 17

High level governance structure 17

GFRS governance structure 18

6. Finances 19

Financial expenditure in 2025-26 19

7. Operational 20

Current establishment 20

Collaboration and mutual aid 23

Mutual aid and assistance 23

Community benefit 24

Operational assurance 24

Audit and assurance 24

His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 24

County council audit 24

8. Looking forward 25

The operating environment 25

The main drivers shaping our plans 26

Our aims and key objectives to 2030 27

Monitoring and delivery 28

9. Have your say 29

Appendix 1: 2025-26 performance 30

1. Introduction and joint foreword

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to publish an 'Annual Statement of Assurance'. This document is expected to provide assurance to communities and government regarding the delivery of our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), financial, governance, operational matters, and the National Framework itself.

We are pleased to share our Statement of Assurance for the financial year 2025–26, confirming that Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) continues to meet its statutory duties. This includes compliance with the Fire and Rescue Services Act, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, the Civil Contingencies Act, and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) operates as part of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), which serves as the Fire Authority. As an integral part of the Council's wider services, GFRS benefits from collaboration with a range of other departments - enhancing performance and helping ensure legal and regulatory responsibilities are met.

This was the last year of our CRMP for the period 2022-26 and throughout this period, GFRS has continued to provide high-quality Response, Prevention, and Protection services to communities across Gloucestershire. Over the past year in particular GFRS has made excellent progress across a range of improvement areas; this includes delivering on the strategic priorities set out in our CRMP, and continuing to address outstanding recommendations identified in our most recent inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The latter has been recognised and resulted in GFRS being removed from a period of enhanced monitoring by government.

The CRMP for the next four years has been developed with residents, partners, staff, and GCC and was approved at Cabinet in April 2026. This sets out a direction and aims for delivery on the way, to ensure GFRS not only maintains high-quality service delivery to communities across the county but is also able to maximise improvement opportunities and overcome the challenges that lay ahead.

We remain committed to ongoing improvement and to fulfilling the Service's vision for the future.

'To create a positive workplace culture that empowers and supports our people to provide the highest standard of community safety and emergency response services to the communities of Gloucestershire'.



Mark Preece
Chief Fire Officer



Councillor Paul Hodgkinson
Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Fire

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2025-26

As the Fire and Rescue Authority, GCC is responsible for regularly identifying and assessing foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks - whether local, cross-border, multi-agency, or national. This risk assessment helps us determine how best to use our resources to protect communities, with a particular focus on those most vulnerable.

Our approach is set out in the CRMP, which outlines how current and future risks will be managed to keep people safe now, and in the years ahead. The previous CRMP, covering the period 2022 to 2026 has been superseded but this annual assurance statement relates to the last financial year of that period, 2025-26. This section is aligned to the four strategic aims set out in that plan, and provides examples of the progress made against each during that time.

Our new CRMP covering 2026 to 2030 was approved in April 2026 and is now helping to direct and align key areas of work across GFRS. Our next statement of assurance, looking at the financial year 2026-27, will be the first to update on progress on that plan. The CRMP 26-30 is available on the GFRS website at www.glosfire.gov.uk.

Strategic Aim: People

'Ensure our services are delivered by a professional, well equipped, highly skilled, motivated and well-developed workforce which is able to work safely and whose composition reflects our diverse community'.



2. Delivering our CRMP in 2025-26



People

We continue to deliver our People Plan and wider workforce priorities, aligning activity with recommendations from the HMICFRS, our Workplace Charter and the Independent Review. During 2025/26, significant progress has been made embedding learning, development and workforce planning arrangements that support both individual development and long-term organisational resilience.

Career Development Pathways are now established across all roles and are increasingly embedded within appraisal discussions, learning plans and workforce development activity. Alongside this, leadership and management development programmes, coaching, mentoring, apprenticeships and regular continuing professional development opportunities have continued to expand, providing staff with clearer development opportunities and supporting greater consistency in leadership and management practice across GFRS.

Access to learning and development has also continued to improve through increased use of e-learning, blended face to face learning, bitesize development sessions and structured annual training plans. These arrangements are helping to create a more accessible and consistent learning offer for both operational and non-operational staff, while supporting future workforce and succession planning objectives.

While further work remains to ensure consistent application across all departments, Career Development Pathways are increasingly being used to support performance management, talent development, promotion readiness and succession planning. Assurance and monitoring arrangements are developing to improve consistency, identify barriers and support improvement activity where required.

Developing effective, values-led leadership continues to be a key priority for GFRS. Established leadership development programmes, manager/staff induction, leadership forums and continuing professional development opportunities are helping to strengthen capability, reinforce expected behaviours and improve consistency in management practice across all levels of the organisation.

A significant focus during the year has been strengthening employee voice and organisational insight. Staff surveys, Your GFRS engagement activity, staff networks, Leadership Connection Sessions and follow up action plans have all supported greater employee involvement in organisational development and service improvement activity. Routes for raising concerns and providing feedback have also been strengthened through enhanced support arrangements and the continued development of the Professional Standards Unit and confidential reporting mechanisms.

Progress has also continued in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Positive Action activity has expanded through dedicated training, local delivery and improved community insight. Equality Impact Assessments are now embedded within Service decision making processes, while staff networks continue to provide valuable insight into organisational policies, service delivery and workforce initiatives. Together, these arrangements are helping to improve inclusion, awareness and confidence across GFRS.

Actions arising from the Independent Review have continued to be delivered throughout 2025/26. Activity has focused on strengthening leadership visibility, reinforcing organisational values, improving opportunities for employee voice and building trust across the workforce. This work remains closely aligned to the Service's wider improvement programme and cultural transformation journey, helping to ensure improvements are sustained and embedded over the longer term.

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2025-26

During 2025/26, the Service also completed comprehensive reviews of its Wholetime Firefighter recruitment processes, Grey Book promotion arrangements and recruitment and selection policies. These reviews confirmed that GFRS operates a robust, values-led framework aligned to the National Fire Chiefs Council Leadership Framework, our Workplace Charter and commitments within the People Plan and newly created workforce strategy. Key strengths included structured and moderated decision making, behavioural assessment methods, diverse assessment panels, strong equality safeguards and the use of technology to support fair and consistent recruitment processes.

The Wholetime Firefighter recruitment review demonstrated improved diversity outcomes at appointment stage across a number of underrepresented groups, providing assurance that GFRS recruitment arrangements are supporting workforce diversification. The Grey Book promotions review similarly confirmed that the overall structure remains robust and credible, while also identifying opportunities to further strengthen governance, communication, operational assessment processes and leadership development arrangements to improve consistency and candidate experience.

Overall GFRS has continued to strengthen its approach to leadership, development, inclusion, workforce planning and employee engagement. While continuous improvement remains a key principle, the arrangements now in place provide increasing assurance that people related improvements are becoming embedded within normal Service governance, workforce planning and organisational development activity.



2. Delivering our CRMP in 2025-26

Strategic Aim: Prevention and Protection

'Work with our local communities to reduce risks to life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies'



Prevention

Prevention activity continued to grow and has made a positive impact on the people living, working and travelling in Gloucestershire, with a strong focus on those most vulnerable to fire and other emergencies. During 2025/26, work centred on four priorities: prevention and education, partnership working, continuous improvement, and targeted support for those most at risk.

Prevention education was delivered to almost 9,000 children while we expanded activity to address risks facing adolescents, including exploitation, violence and anti-social behaviour. SkillZONE is our interactive life-skills and safety education centre, and during the past year it secured funding for a Serious Violence Duty Officer for a further two years. This enabled the creation of StreetWIZE, a scenario exploring county lines exploitation and how it may be presented to children as a route to fitting in with peers. Further knife-related work strengthened this learning by helping children consider the consequences of knife possession and identify trusted people they could speak to if they felt pressured.

We evaluated the impact of this work, and this continues to demonstrate it makes a real difference. Teachers consistently feedback that pupils better understand risk following their session, with satisfaction rates of 99–100% in 2025/26. New evaluation is this also shows that children are making safer choices about everyday risks after taking part in SkillZONE sessions.

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2025-26

Partnership working remains central to maximising impact, and we are proactive in sharing information and removing barriers to good practice where this is appropriate. We have re-energised joint home visits for people requiring a multi-agency response, working alongside trusted agencies already supporting residents who may be vulnerable or hesitant to ask for help.

Engagement with statutory and third sector partners has increased awareness of fire risk factors and strengthened their ability to identify concerns during visits, contributing to a small annual increase in partner referrals. Partnership working has also supported road safety education, helping us identify risk areas and deliver education to more than 12,500 teenagers.

Throughout 2025/26, we have focused on increasing both the volume and quality of home fire safety visits. All wholetime firefighters received training in carrying out a person-centred approach and in identifying safeguarding needs. This has led to measurable improvements in visit quality, a 26% increase in completed visits compared with the previous year, and a corresponding increase in visits for people with known vulnerabilities.

We have strengthened evaluation to ensure home fire safety visits are person-centred and effective in reducing risk. Quality assurance now assesses timeliness, risk mitigation, safeguarding and partner referrals, with findings used to improve training and delivery. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) home fire safety evaluation toolkit enables us to contact a random sample of residents to check whether key advice has been retained and safety improvements made.

This supports our focus on identifying and reaching those most likely to experience a serious fire resulting in injury. Alongside this, we have developed a community engagement and events campaign plan to reduce risks from fires and wider emergencies, including cold-water incidents, road traffic collisions and other forms of harm.

Prevention activities will adapt to meet current and emerging risks over the coming years, as set out in our CRMP but broadly linked to enhancing our rural offer, road safety, responding to changing demographics and socio-economic factors that are likely to increase the risk of fire injuries or deaths. This will need to be carried out within an operating environment affected by wider local authority financial pressures.





2. Delivering our CRMP in 2025-26





Protection

Protection activity during 2025–26 has built on the strong foundations established in the previous year, scrutiny is now embedded, enabled by robust governance and performance processes, resulting in a more mature, consistent and intelligence-led approach to regulation. Enhanced use of systems and data has strengthened the identification and prioritisation of high-risk premises, ensuring resources are increasingly aligned to risk and delivering greater impact on community safety.

The implementation of the Enforcement Plan has enabled a more consistent and proportionate use of enforcement powers, leading to improved compliance across inspected premises and stronger evidential practices; the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) remains on track with improved quality and effectiveness of audits, driving better remediation of fire safety deficiencies, particularly in higher-risk settings, and partnership working has continued to evolve through joint inspections and intelligence sharing, enabling earlier identification of non-compliance and greater consistency across regulatory partners.

Alongside this, targeted business engagement activity has improved awareness and understanding of legal responsibilities among responsible persons, supporting higher levels of voluntary compliance and more constructive engagement with industry.

Protection activity continues to align with national legislative reform, including the Fire Safety (England) Regulations and the Building Safety Act, ensuring up-to-date regulatory oversight of complex and higher-risk buildings, and overall, the Service can provide assurance that Protection is effective, risk-based and delivering sustained improvement, with demonstrable progress in reducing risk and improving compliance across Gloucestershire.

Looking at the year ahead it is anticipated that better access to more up to date information about relevant premises across the county will increase the number of known high risk premises requiring inspection, interventions, and ongoing regulatory activity. This will present a significant opportunity for building safety; however, the challenge will be to respond appropriately within wider local authority financial pressures. It will be vital therefore to prioritise the highest risk premises and manage resources to obtain the greatest return on that investment whilst ensuring statutory responsibilities are discharged.

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2025-26

Strategic Aim: Response and Resilience

'Respond promptly and efficiently to deal with fires and other emergencies when they occur'.



Response

Our on-call workforce is vital in delivering fire cover across Gloucestershire but is subject to increasing recruitment and retention challenges that are recognised nationwide. During the year we have strengthened our commitment to recruitment and retention through a dedicated on-call improvement programme. We will be developing this long-term improvement plan, focused on recruitment, retention, wellbeing, training, culture and availability, shaped by extensive staff engagement, evidence gathering, data analysis and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

As part of our commitment to modernising our rural response model and improving workforce efficiency, we have implemented a 'day staff resilience cover' arrangement which enables operational managers to support both wholetime and on-call fire stations when staffing levels are reduced. This has strengthened operational resilience, increased appliance availability and reduced the need for overtime expenditure through more effective use of existing resources. The approach ensures communities continue to receive a timely and effective emergency response, while supporting the long-term sustainability of our on-call workforce by keeping appliances available and firefighters connected to the communities they serve.

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2025-26

In response to evolving community risks, we have established a response capability to support the safe rescue of casualties with complex needs. Investment in specialist equipment, training and instructor development has enhanced the skills and confidence of frontline crews while improving firefighter safety during manual handling operations. The introduction of specialist resources and operational procedures has strengthened the service's ability to respond effectively to complex incidents and support vulnerable members of the community.

We have introduced adjusted start and end times for shifts to increase efficiency and effectiveness of our response model. The benefits of this change are currently being measured and will inform next steps.



3. Service performance in 2025-26

Performance processes

We always aim to continue delivering high quality services to the community. We have robust processes and structures in place to ensure the right information is regularly monitored and scrutinised to make sure we know how we are doing at any point in time and can respond to changing circumstances in a timely way.

To help us achieve this we have a broad suite of data and information which are used on a day-to-day basis by teams delivering within Gloucestershire's homes and communities, and a shorter list of key indicators of performance (KPIs) that are reported through our governance framework. This framework is more detailed and frequent at an operational management level and is then provided at a broader level to enable strategic oversight of key performance areas within GFRS (for example at our Strategic Leadership Team meetings). Following improvements in 25-26 performance against these is now measured monthly at a senior management level, and more frequently at an operational level.

This is subject to further scrutiny within GCC as the Fire Authority on a quarterly basis, as performance reports move from GFRS into GCC's governance structure. This structure can be seen in the visual on page 17, and quarterly performance reporting into the Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee is publicly available on the GCC website:- Home / Council and democracy / Councillors and committees (including scrutiny)

Challenging targets are set each year by taking account of national comparisons, previous and current performance, and local pressures and priorities.

To understand how GFRS compares nationally against comparable fire services, we carry out an annual benchmarking exercise that is provided as a report to GFRS SLT and GCC's Corporate Leadership Team and Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee. The most recent report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is publicly available on the GCC website.

We are realising the potential of Microsoft 365 software on an ongoing basis. PowerBI is a tool that is part of our Microsoft 365 suite that turns data into insights, and during 2025-26 we continued to unlock its potential. We have established new reporting functionality and have designed and delivered suites of 'dashboards' to enable more accessible, timely, and accurate reporting, from operational to more strategic levels.

3. Service performance in 2025-26

Performance overview at year end

GFRS reported a core set of seven high level 'Corporate KPIs' through GFRS and into GCC governance structures. Four of these measures were better than target at the end of quarter four (January to March) 2025/26 and three were worse than target.

Average response times to dwelling fires (national definition) at the end of quarter four was 9 minutes 11 seconds and this was better than the same period in the previous year (9 minutes 29 seconds). However, this outturn is worse by 11 seconds than our target of 9 minutes. We are always seeking ways to improve on these figures.

The service completed 4,880 'safe and well' visits between April and March, with 1,553 closed in the last quarter. This quarterly figure is equivalent to a rate of 3.76 per 1,000 population, which is better than our target of 1.59, and better than the same point in the previous year. The service continues its positive work to reach the most vulnerable people in our community, where data tells us there is a higher risk of death if a dwelling fire were to occur. In quarter four 2025/26, 92.1% of safe and well visits were to people deemed vulnerable, this is better than our target of 89%. We are continuing to enhance how we are using data to help us target the right places and people; and make the best use of our resources by improving how we are mapping these data visually and aligning them with station areas.

The rate of dwelling fires in quarter four was 1.17 per 10,000 population (equating to 78 dwelling fires), which is worse than the forecast figure. Of those 78 dwelling fires, 91% were accidental (61) which is higher than the same point last year (88%, 66 out of 75 dwelling fires). Overall, there has been a small increase in dwelling fires in the last 12 months, with 289 attended during 2024-25 which increased to 324 in 2025/26. Our prevention and communication teams continue to work proactively to drive high profile and relevant awareness campaigns through various media channels, physical content, and through attendance at events.

There is a requirement for business owners to make sure their buildings are safe. To support this, the service operates a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) which manages risk by assessing various factors which relate to risk to life. The overall programme, which spanned from June 2023 to March 2026, identified 2,343 premises for inspection. At the end of quarter four 2025/26 had been successfully completed: planning has already taken place for the future programme of work that will be supported by new software and updated base data.

During the 2025/26 programme, 80 premises were identified to receive a site-specific risk information (SSRI) visit. These visits are carried out to gather detailed information about specific sites that may pose risks in the event of a fire or other emergency. At the end of quarter four, the programme had completed only 71 meaning we fell short of 100% completion target by 12%.

In total, there were four fatalities from fire in 2025/26. We carry out detailed investigations and use data and insights to produce reports that help us to identify any information that can improve how we carry out prevention activities or respond to an incident.

Please see Appendix 1 for a further breakdown of performance.

4. Main legal and statutory responsibilities

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

The Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 sets out the duties and powers of fire authorities, which are summarised below.

- extinguishing fires;
- protecting life and property;
- rescuing people from road traffic accidents;
- assessing and preventing fire and rescue-related risks, and
- responding to other emergencies.

The Act also references the statutory basis for reinforcement schemes and arrangements for assistance: linking directly to cross-border resilience and mutual aid. GFRS fulfils these functions through the efforts of our Response, Prevention, and Protection Teams and the effectiveness and efficiency with which these services perform are regularly monitored and scrutinised at both operational and more strategic levels.

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

The Act established Fire and Rescue Authorities as Category 1 responders, with duties to assess risk, plan, maintain emergency plans, warn and inform the public, and cooperate/share information with other responders. It also sets out the need for a Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and the local FRS to be a member. The LRF ensures that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi agency response to emergencies which may have a significant impact on communities. Plans are drawn from risk assessments and have regard for the arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public at the time of an emergency. In Gloucestershire the LRF is established and functioning well, with effective links directly into senior management at GFRS for ongoing communications and support. GFRS is a key member of the LRF and a vital service in the planning and actioning of multi-agency responses to emergencies situations.

Fire Safety Act 2021

The Fire Safety Act 2021 clarified that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to the structure, external walls, balconies, cladding systems and flat entrance doors of multi-occupied residential buildings. This strengthens the responsibilities placed on building owners and responsible persons, and supports GFRS in its role as enforcing authority by providing clearer scope for inspection, regulation and enforcement activity in relevant premises.

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

GFRS enforces the following fire safety legislation on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Authority:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- The Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990.
- The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

4. Main legal and statutory responsibilities

Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

On 23 January 2023, new fire safety regulations came into force, based on recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. These place duties on 'responsible persons' (RPs) in multi-occupied residential buildings, with actions required depending on building height.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service continues to support building owners by providing guidance on the strengthened requirements. These include the full recording of fire risk assessments, clearer responsibilities during building handovers, and updated standards for fire doors and evacuation procedures. Our fire safety inspectors are trained in these changes and work to ensure accurate, up-to-date safety information is available for all high-risk buildings in the county.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017

This Act introduced a statutory duty for police, fire, and ambulance services to collaborate. It also created two distinct routes enabling Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to have a direct role in the governance of fire and rescue services – either by becoming one of two forms of new 'PCC-style' fire authority or by being allocated a voting seat on existing fire authorities. The Act also allows for the provision of police and crime commissioners to be fire and rescue authorities and includes provisions for the inspection of fire and rescue services.

Building Safety Act 2022

The Building Safety Act 2022 takes forward the Government's commitment to a fundamental reform of the building safety system. The Act gives effect to policies set out in the Building a Safer Future consultation response, published in April 2020. It also serves as the vehicle for wider improvements and takes forward further changes to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO), building on the Fire Safety Act 2021. In line with the latest amendments to the Act - including enhanced powers for Remediation Orders and Contribution Orders, mandatory notifications during insolvency, and updated fire safety requirements - GFRS continues to strengthen regulatory oversight, work closely with the Building Safety Regulator, and support partners in ensuring compliance across higher-risk premises. We remain committed to promoting safer buildings through proactive engagement, enforcement, and the integration of emerging legislative requirements into our inspection and protection activities.

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England sets out the government's expectations for all fire and rescue services in England. The framework recognises that fire and rescue services are best placed to identify, plan, prepare for and address the risks within the communities they serve. As a County council FRS, the framework requires a CRMP and annual statement of assurance to be developed, approved, and published, plus a medium-term financial plan, an efficiency plan, and a reserves strategy- all of which can be part of the parent authority's documentation.

GFRS also have a responsibility to report annual statistics to the Home Office, the most recent returns are publicly available on the Government's statistical data set webpages, as 'fire statistics data tables'In addition to the fire-specific legislation set out above, the Fire Authority also operate within wider statutory duties that apply to local authorities and public bodies.

4. Main legal and statutory responsibilities

Wider public authority duties

In addition to the fire-specific legislation set out above, GFRS operates within the wider statutory duties that apply to local authorities and public bodies. These include duties relating to best value, equality and diversity, health and safety, safeguarding, data protection, transparency, procurement, financial stewardship and effective governance. These responsibilities are discharged through GCC's corporate governance framework and through GFRS policies, procedures, training, assurance and scrutiny arrangements, helping to ensure that services are delivered lawfully, safely, fairly, transparently and in the public interest.



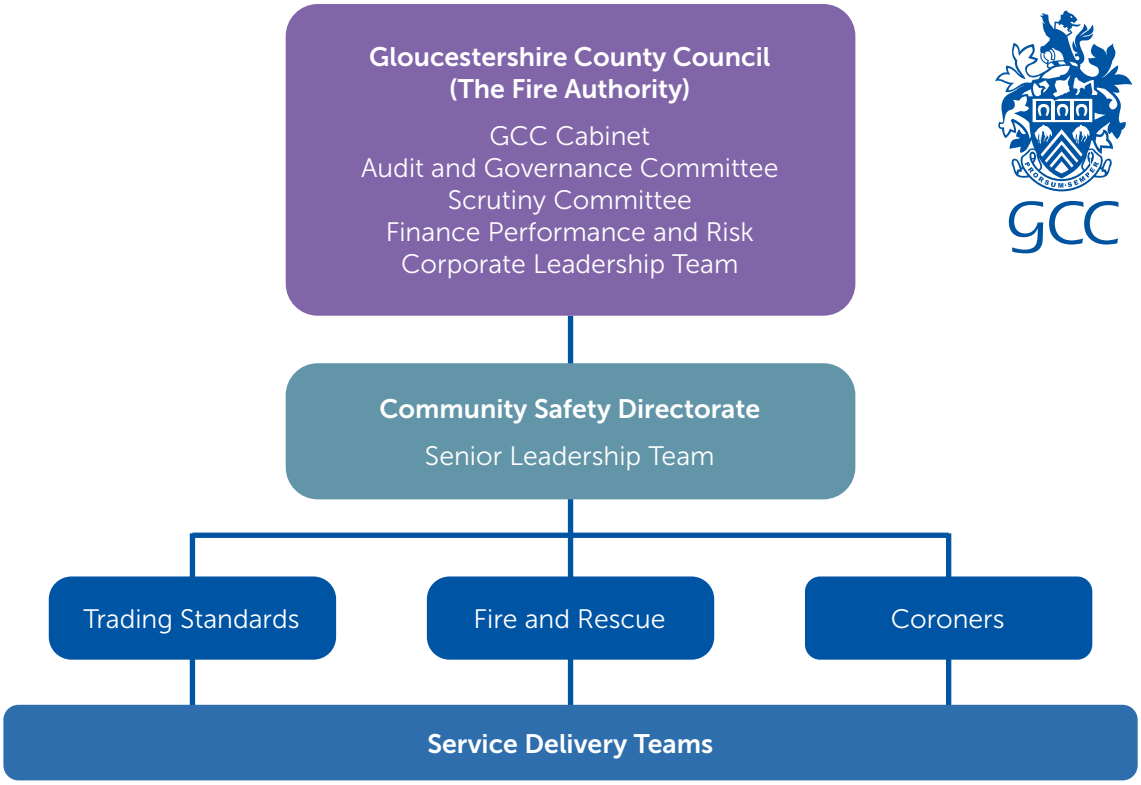
5. Governance and assurance

The Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Authority, operating under Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), follows a formally approved Code of Governance, aligned with the council's broader governance arrangements. Governance describes how GCC ensures it does the right things, in the right way, for the right people - acting in a timely, inclusive, transparent, honest, and accountable manner. It defines the systems, processes, culture, and values by which the council operates, holds itself accountable, engages with communities, and, where appropriate, leads them GCC Constitution | Gloucestershire County Council.

GCC's governance framework aligns legislative requirements, governance principles, and management processes. This Code of Corporate Governance - a public declaration of the council's commitment - is based on the CIPFA/SOLACE "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016" and is updated annually. It was reviewed and endorsed alongside the 2025 26 Annual Governance Statement and Draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2026. A link to GCC's Code of Corporate Governance can be found here: Code of corporate governance | Gloucestershire County Council.

GCC requires all directorates and service areas to conduct an annual self-assessment of compliance against the seven core principles within the framework, formalised as the Annual Governance Statement. This statement, which details the council's performance, control environment, and planned improvements, is published as part of the annual Statement of Accounts. The statement can be found here: Statement of accounts | Gloucestershire County Council.

High level governance structure



5. Governance and assurance

GFRS governance structure

GFRS operates within a robust and well-established internal governance framework that supports both operational delivery and strategic oversight. A structured tier of meetings - ranging from operational meetings, staff consultation groups, to strategic leadership - ensures that key information flows effectively throughout the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to:

- financial planning and budget monitoring;
- performance measurement and reporting;
- risk identification, assessment and mitigation, and
- service planning, programme oversight and project delivery.

This integrated governance structure enables senior leaders to maintain real-time situational awareness, while also identifying and responding to emerging risks, challenges, and opportunities. It ensures that decisions are timely, informed, and aligned with the long-term goals of both the Service and the wider county council.

In addition to internal processes, GFRS also reports regularly into a dedicated Improvement Board within GCC, which provides internal challenge, direction, and alignment with council priorities. Membership includes representatives from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), the Local Government Association (LGA), and HMICFRS. Their involvement enhances the transparency, objectivity, and rigour of GFRS's governance arrangements - strengthening both accountability and the Service's capacity for continuous improvement. GFRS provides regular reporting into Gloucestershire County Council's overarching governance framework as set out on page 17.

GFRS was also accountable to the Fire Performance Oversight Group (FPOG), chaired by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) up until August 2025. This group provided independent scrutiny of progress against HMICFRS inspection recommendations.

6. Finances

GFRS manages its finances through robust governance arrangements, supported by established financial processes and controls within GCC. Our financial management arrangements meet the highest standards, and we maintain robust process and controls such as:

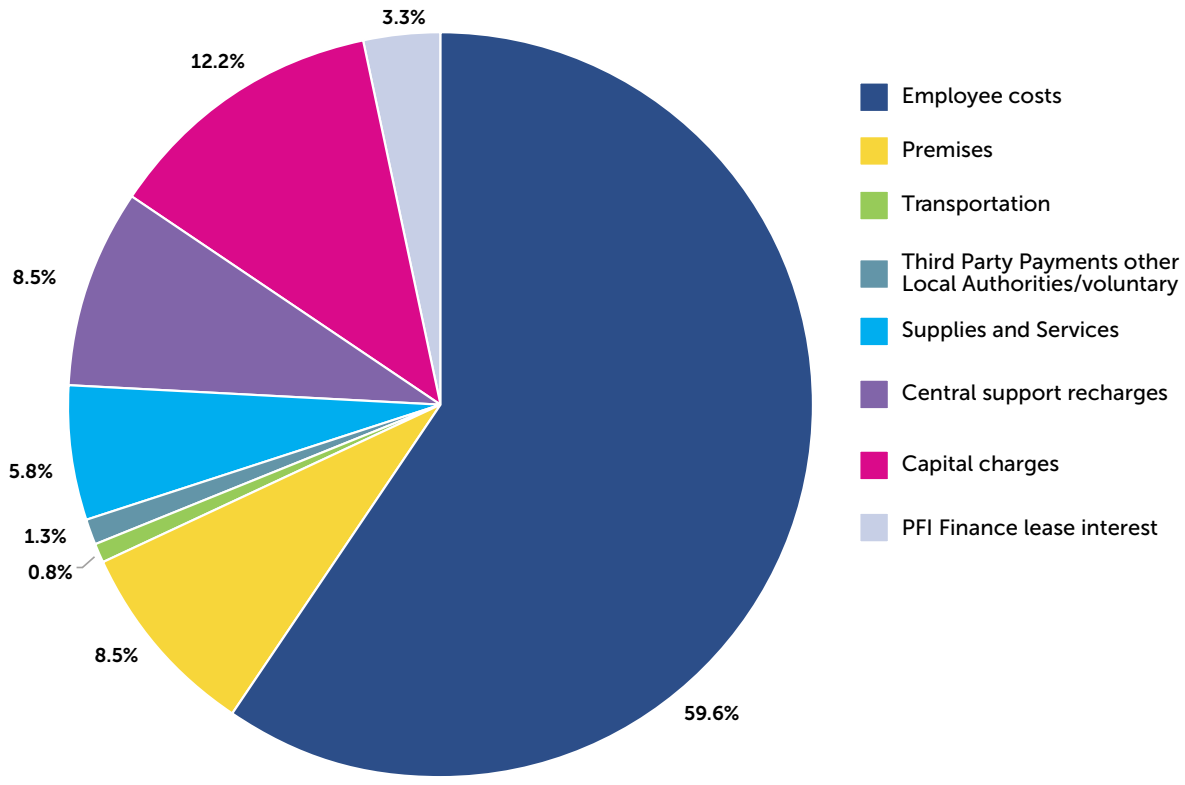
- Monthly management accounts reported via our Financial Management Group, and into GFRS Senior Leadership Team;
- Quarterly management accounts are produced and reported back to the corporate Finance, Performance and Risk meetings and Scrutiny meetings;
- An annual statement of accounts is produced by external auditors in line with accounting codes of practice and is scrutinised by GFRS senior leaders, and scrutinised and approved by GCC prior to publication.

The latest available annual statement of accounts, and historic documents, are publicly available on the GCC website on the Statement of Accounts webpage.

Financial expenditure in 2025-2026:

In 2025/2026 GFRS net expenditure was £34,705,000; this figure includes expenditure of £39,242,000 and income of £4,537,000 consisting of specific revenue grants from HM Government and funds received where the Service has charged for activities related to its non-emergency functions.

Data source: *Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)*



7. Operational

Current establishment

Workforce overview

As at the end of the 2025/26 financial year, GFRS had a total headcount of 506 employees. Our workforce is made up of:

- 38% wholetime firefighters.
- 46% on-call firefighters.
- 16% support and fire control staff.

Workforce diversity

We are committed to building a workforce that is inclusive, representative and reflective of the communities we serve.

- 29% of our total workforce are women, which is above the latest national average for total workforce across all Fire and Rescue Services in England, which is 20.8% at March 2025 (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government).
- 4% of our staff are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is below the national average of 6.4% at the end of March 2025 (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government) and below the local Gloucestershire population average (6.9% – 2021 Census).

Although our workforce does not yet fully reflect the diversity of our communities, we are actively working to improve representation through targeted engagement to underrepresented groups as part of our recruitment campaigns.

Workforce structure and operational deployment

We operate 21 fire stations and 32 pumping appliances. As the county is largely rural 16 of our stations are staffed by on-call firefighters, which is a more efficient use of our resources in rural areas, but creates challenges for availability at certain times of day. On-call firefighters respond when needed, often from home or a workplace, rather than being based at a station.

Of the remaining five stations, two are staffed by wholetime firefighters and three are staffed by a mix of both whole and on-call.

This flexible crewing model ensures that resources are matched to local risk and demand, maintaining effective emergency cover while delivering value for money.

On-call firefighters: contribution and community benefits

On-call firefighters are trained professionals who live or work in the communities they serve. They are deployed flexibly across a wide range of activities, including:

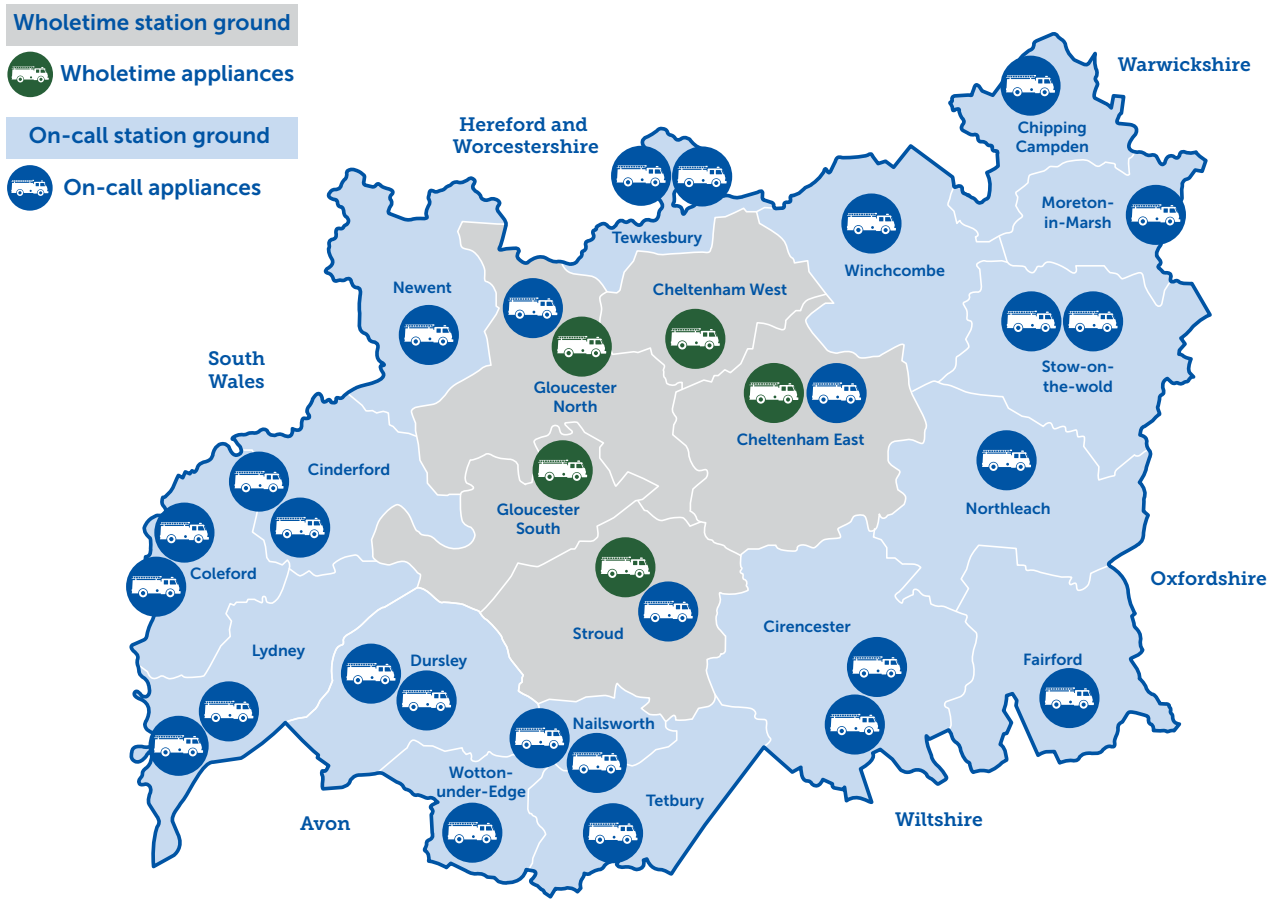
- Providing emergency response in their local area, improving response times in remote or rural communities.
- Delivering community safety education and prevention advice, building trust and resilience within their own local areas.
- Crewing specialist appliances such as water rescue or wildfire units, based on additional training and local risk.
- Supporting operational resilience, by covering short-notice absences or surges in demand and working alongside wholetime colleagues during major incidents.

7. Operational

- Co-responding to medical emergencies, often arriving ahead of ambulances and providing life-saving early interventions.
- Supporting our prevention teams, including Safe and Well visits, home fire safety checks, and public engagement initiatives.

Our on-call model delivers real social and economic benefits, including:

- Keeping fire stations open and active in smaller communities.
- Promoting local employment.
- Enhancing community safety through visible, local role models.
- Providing cost-effective emergency coverage without compromising service standards.



7. Operational



Control and support staff

Our Fire Control team is an integral part of our frontline emergency response. Based at our Tri-Service Emergency Control Centre, Fire Control staff are responsible for:

- Handling 999 emergency calls, often during high-pressure and life-threatening situations.
- Mobilising the appropriate resources to incidents across Gloucestershire and supporting mutual aid to neighbouring services.
- Providing life-saving guidance over the phone, including fire survival advice, CPR instructions, or reassurance to vulnerable callers until crews arrive.
- Managing incident communications, ensuring up-to-date and accurate information is relayed between crews, officers, and partner agencies.
- Supporting large-scale or multi-agency incidents, including coordinating resource deployment, liaising with other emergency services, and managing radio traffic.

Fire Control staff are highly trained, technically skilled and emotionally resilient, working calmly and decisively, often in dynamic and demanding environments. Their contribution ensures that our operational response is safe, efficient and effective from the moment a call is received.

Our support staff also play a crucial role in maintaining the daily operations of the Service. They deliver core functions such as:

- Strategic planning
- Governance and assurance
- HR, administration, and logistics
- Fleet maintenance and equipment servicing
- Procurement, stores, and facilities management

During major incidents or periods of sustained operational demand, both Fire Control and support staff consistently go above and beyond, demonstrating commitment, flexibility and professionalism to ensure the public receives the highest standard of service.

7. Operational

Collaboration and mutual aid

GFRS remains committed to working in partnership with other organisations to ensure our communities have access to services that are efficient, effective, and provide best value. Collaboration is not only a statutory requirement under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 - it is a core part of how we maximise our resources and deliver broader social value for the people of Gloucestershire.

We continue to build on our collaborative approach by sharing facilities, expertise, and responsibilities with emergency service partners. GFRS co-locates key operational functions, such as control rooms and fleet workshops, with other emergency services to improve communication and coordination. We have extended this model into rural areas by sharing fire station space in Newent and Winchcombe with Gloucestershire Constabulary, enhancing visibility and coverage in those communities. We also co-locate with South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAST) and Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA), strengthening our joint response capabilities and promoting efficient use of public assets.

Beyond sharing facilities, we work closely with partners on a wide range of joint safety initiatives. These include collaborative work on road safety education, safeguarding vulnerable individuals, and an agreement with both Telecare and SWAST to respond to specific calls for assistance. These arrangements allow us to use our existing capabilities to deliver a more coordinated and timely response, ultimately improving outcomes for individuals in need.

Each collaboration is underpinned by clear agreements - such as Memoranda of Understanding and partnership contracts - which set out the purpose, responsibilities, and governance arrangements. These are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain aligned with the needs of our communities and the objectives of the service.

To support oversight and strategic direction, the Gloucestershire Emergency Services Collaboration Board - comprising GFRS, SWAST, Gloucestershire Constabulary, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner - meets regularly to ensure partnership efforts remain effective and focused on shared goals. This board supports the legal duty to seek collaborative opportunities and ensures that services work together where it is in the mutual interest of efficiency or effectiveness

Mutual aid and assistance

In addition to our local partnerships, GFRS meets its statutory duties under Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 by maintaining formal mutual aid agreements with all six neighbouring fire and rescue services. These legal arrangements ensure we can share resources and provide support across borders during major or complex incidents.

This reciprocal approach enhances our collective resilience, ensuring the fastest possible response regardless of geographical boundaries. It also provides greater flexibility and capacity to manage large-scale emergencies, keeping people and communities safe during times of greatest need.

Community benefit

The overarching aim of all our collaborative and mutual aid arrangements is to serve the people of Gloucestershire more effectively. By working together with partner organisations, we are better positioned to respond quickly, use public funds wisely, and deliver services that are joined up and responsive to local needs. These partnerships allow us to extend our reach, reduce duplication, and focus our resources where they can have the greatest impact.

7. Operational

Operational learning

GFRS recognise the importance of continuous improvement in all the services it delivers, with particular focus on the safe and effective delivery of emergency service response.

The Operational Assurance team promotes workforce learning by identifying good practice and where improvements can be made in the delivery of our service. It allows the service to identify trends and provide evidence to guide future plans, especially in the areas of training, operational policy and investment. This work not only supports local learning but includes reporting through the national channels of Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) and the National Operational Learning (NOL).

Audit and assurance

His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS):

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses and reports on the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services (FRSs) to make communities safer. They ask questions they believe the public wish to have answered, and publish their findings, conclusions and recommendations in an accessible form, using their expertise to interpret the evidence.

HMICFRS provide authoritative information to allow the public to compare the performance of their FRS against others, and to determine whether performance has improved or deteriorated over time. Recommendations are designed to bring about improvements in the service provided to the public.

GFRS was inspected by the HMICFRS as part of the third cycle of inspections that began in February 2023. The final report informed a comprehensive improvement plan that has been carefully planned out, prioritised, and has been successfully progressed over the following years as part of our continual improvement journey. The delivery has been co-ordinated and supported by a dedicated team and overseen by GFRS SLT, a joint GFRS and GCC Improvement Board, and further GCC governance structures.

We have made great progress in the past year with the last of three Causes of Concern being resolved and the majority of Areas for Improvement also completed. This contributed to GFRS being removed by the HMICFRS from a period of enhanced scrutiny. We have spent the last quarter of the year preparing for their next inspection, which is expected in May to June 2026.

County council audit:

GCC routinely undertakes an internal audit of functions and services that are carried out on their behalf.

Audit Risk Assurance (ARA) undertook an annual risk assessment of GFRS as part of our audit planning work in March 2026. As part of this, GFRS was assessed to have areas for inclusion in ARA's Internal Audit Plan for 2026-27 related to any Areas for Improvement (AfI) or Causes of Concern (CoC) that are identified by HMICFRS in their May 2026 inspection.

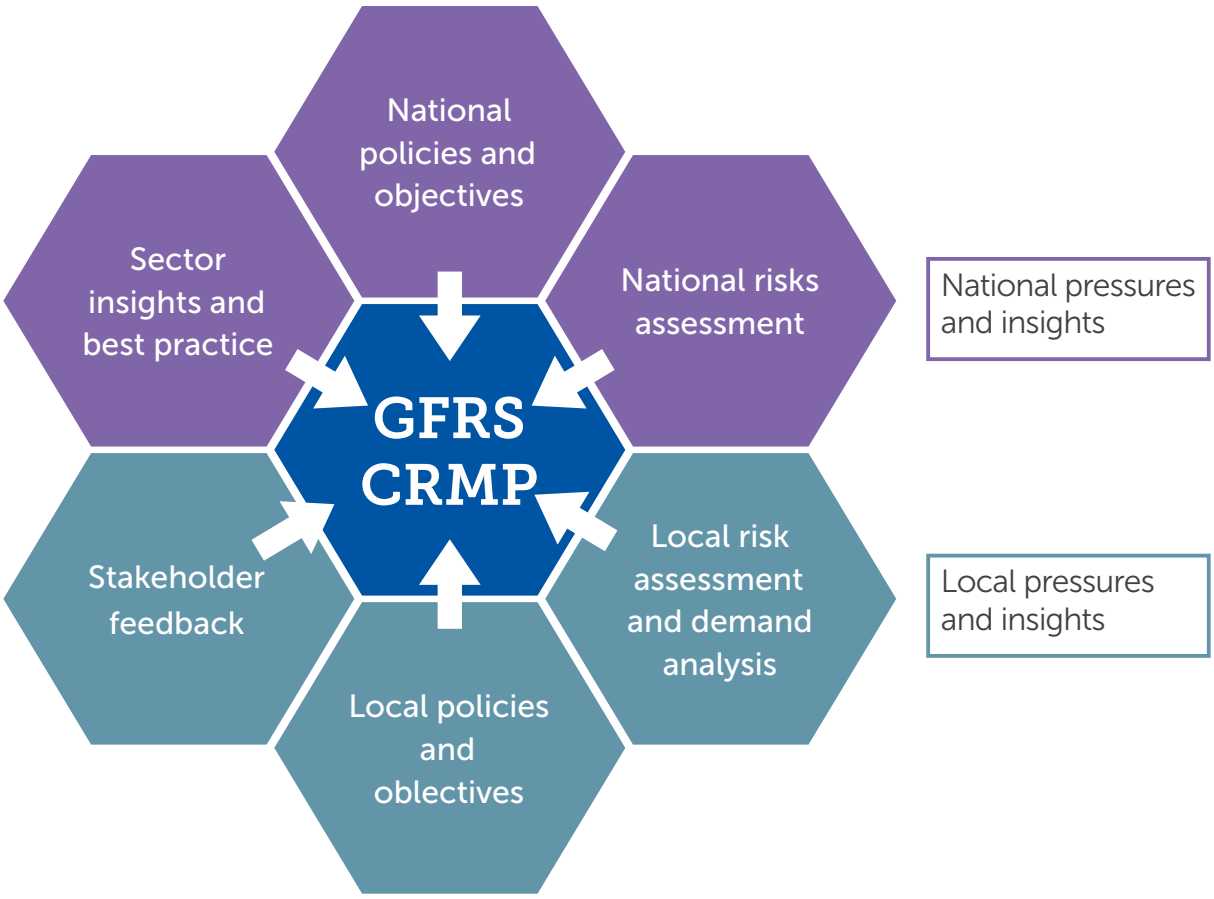
ARA provided an Acceptable level of assurance for GCC as a whole for 2025-26, and this will be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee in July 2026.

8. Looking forward

The operating environment:

GFRS is delivering and planning within an external operating environment that is subject to frequent and ongoing national and local changes. The diagram shows the broad pressures and insights that shape and influence our new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2026-2030. It is vital that these are regularly assessed and discussed to identify both short and long-term risks and opportunities, ensuring we are well positioned to address either. Our Leadership Team regularly assesses our operating environment and maintains a PESTLE assessment as part of its planning and delivery business cycle. A PESTLE assessment is a tool used to understand the external factors that can impact an organisation. The acronym stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental factors.

We make use of publications such as the National Risk Register and State of Fire and Rescue report; and external datasets such as census and Exeter data to better understand the communities we serve. Local knowledge, insights, and incident data support us to be able to understand and assess our local community risks and tailor the delivery of resources and approaches to respond to those effectively. We have also carried out engagement activities on our Community Risk Profile in the autumn of 2024 and wide-reaching public consultation in the development of our CRMP in 2025-26. This ensured we had insight from residents and stakeholders to validate our understanding and plans.



8. Looking forward

The main drivers shaping our plans

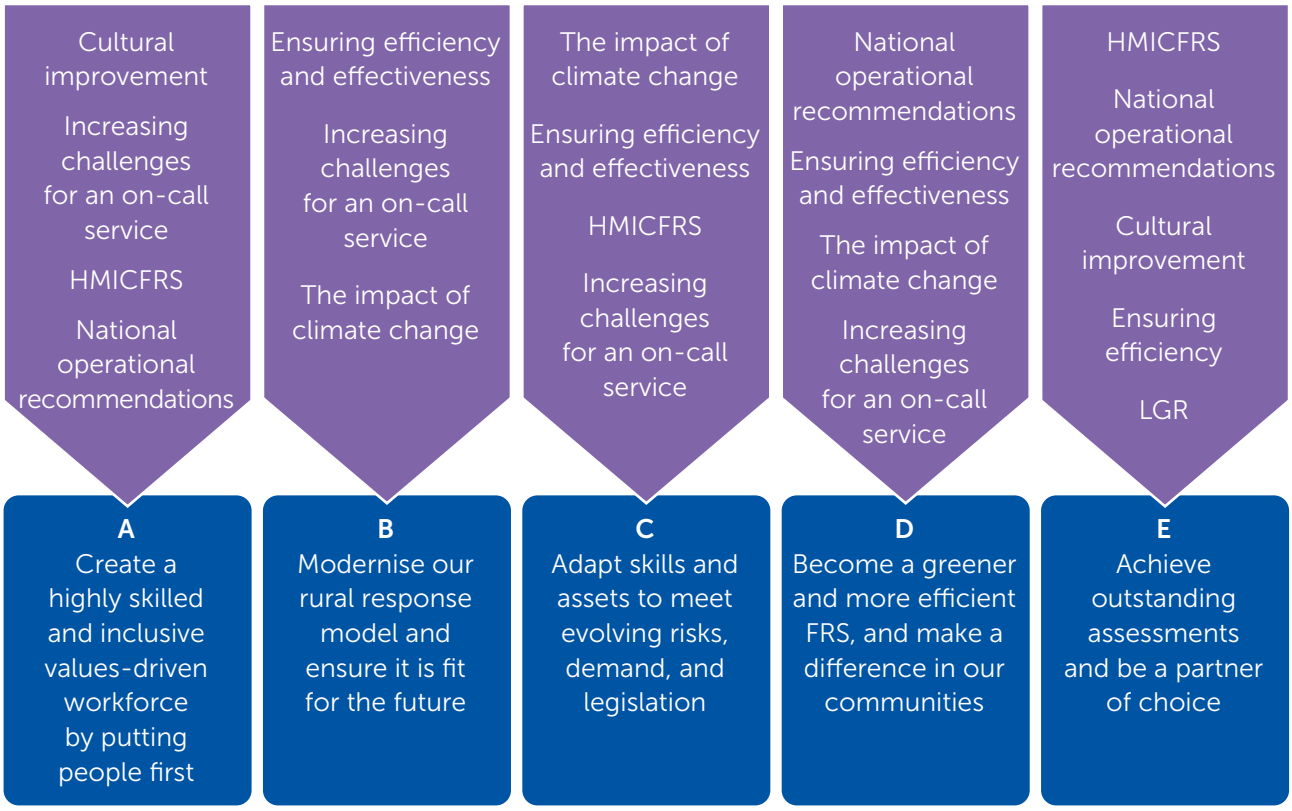
- The impact of climate change
  Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of weather events, affecting fire and rescue risks such as flooding, water rescue, and wildfires. GFRS must adapt its prevention and response activities, skills, and equipment to meet these evolving challenges.
- Increasing challenges for an on-call service
  Recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters is becoming more difficult, GFRS relies on on-call firefighters in more rural areas. We are reviewing our on-call offer and recruitment strategies to maintain adequate fire cover and crew availability.
- Local Government Reorganisation
  Ongoing local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire may significantly impact GFRS. Major changes could require GFRS to establish new governance models and reprioritise plans to enable that to happen quickly.
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
  Recommendations from HMICFRS inspections have driven a transformation programme for GFRS. Using sector best practice and inspection findings is essential to maintain continuous improvement.
- National recommendations and operational guidance
  GFRS stays alert to national recommendations and operational guidance, especially following major incidents like Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena. Embedding these changes ensures safety and alignment with best practice and regulations.
- Cultural improvement
  GFRS is on a cultural improvement journey, addressing historic issues of bullying and racism identified in an independent review. While progress has been made, ongoing efforts continue to ensure an inclusive, values-driven service.
- Ensuring efficiency
  GFRS must balance efficiency with effectiveness amid increasing public sector spending pressures. As a county council-run service, it supports council efficiency savings while striving to improve performance.



8. Looking forward

Our aims and key objectives to 2030

The diagram below shows the flow of main drivers into our aims for 2030:



Each aim has a collection of objectives to help it be achieved:

Aim A: Create a highly skilled and inclusive values-driven workforce by putting people first.

- Continue cultural improvement and deliver the independent review recommendations.
- Develop modern training facilities and ensure competence for current and emerging risks and keep themselves and others safe.
- Refresh the on-call offer to improve recruitment, retention and availability.
- Make workforce planning more data-led to improve resilience.

Aim B: Modernise our rural response model and ensure it is fit for the future.

- Review station distribution and resourcing to align with risk and demand.
- Introduce flexible crewing approaches where they improve availability and efficiency.
- Improve how we deploy available resources to live risks using better tools and data.
- Bring in wholetime days crews at specific stations.

Aim C: Adapt skills and assets to meet evolving risks, demand and legislation.

- Respond to changing vehicle technology and collision complexity.
- Strengthen capability for flooding and wildfires and position equipment effectively.
- Enhance protection activity to support safer buildings and comply with new requirements.
- Increase the productivity of our firefighters and the number and quality of prevention activities.

8. Looking forward

Aim D: Become a greener and more efficient service, and make a difference in our communities.

- Invest in fleet and equipment that improves safety and reduces environmental impact.
- Support communities to be more resilient and improve quality of life.
- Optimise our fire cover and realise efficiencies.
- Use data and interconnected systems to improve productivity and efficiency.

Aim E: Achieve outstanding assessments and be a partner of choice .

- Deliver the transformation programme and achieve outstanding assessments.
- Respond to the challenges and opportunities to come following local government reorganisation.
- Ensure national recommendations are tracked, implemented and reported effectively.
- Improve collaboration and data sharing with partners.

Monitoring and delivery

GFRS has in place robust mechanisms for a range of assurance areas, including strategic planning, delivery and assessment of progress, service performance, risk management, financial management, operational learning, learning and development and more.

Performance is monitored through a suite of higher-level key performance indicators, supported by several more detailed local performance indicators. These are considered operationally on a daily and weekly basis and monthly and quarterly at a more strategic level. Our current suite of KPIs is shown below. These are reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate, and methodologies are being followed or are updated where necessary. This also includes an annual review of targets which are potentially updated each year. These will be expressed in our annual statement of assurance.

Our annual statement of assurance is publicly available on our website on our publications and reports page and provides information to enable residents to hold us to account. This sets out delivery against aims, finances, and performance levels whilst providing context and direction. Quarterly in-year reporting is made public after it has progressed through GCC governance steps and can therefore be accessed through GCC's website on the Council performance page. Internally GFRS has a simple list of prioritised activities mapped to a range of key drivers, and delivery frameworks enabling the service to see at a glance how we are doing in terms of delivering against aims and objectives. Opportunity for positive scrutiny and solutions to challenges happens through team level progress checks and one to one meetings, monthly Fire Leadership Team meetings, and then through various mechanisms within the council's governance framework.

9. Have your say

If you would like to comment on the activities of Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service or you are concerned on any fire safety matter, please visit our website for further information: -

http://www.glosfire.gov.uk

Should you wish to make any further comment, please contact us using the following details: -

Chief Fire Officer
Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service Fire Service HQ
Quayside House
Quay Street
Gloucester GL1 2TZ
Telephone: 01452 888777
Email: fire@glosfire.gov.uk

Appendix 1: 2025-26 performance

The table below contains our highest level of performance indicators, our seven Corporate KPIs. These are reported through GFRS and into GCC for scrutiny and are part of a wider suite of indicators.

Corporate Performance Data Set, as reported April 2026	Good performance = high or low	Outturn at quarter 1 2025-26	Outturn at quarter 2 2025-26	Outturn at quarter 2 2025-26	Outturn at quarter 4 2025-26	Compared to Q4 2024-25	March 2026 target	RAG
Response								
Average response time to dwelling fires (national definition)	Low	10.41	10.11	10.12	9.11	Improved	9:00	Red
% of site-specific risk information visits (SSRIs) annual programme of work completed	High	46.3%	60.0%	70.0%	88.8%	Worsened	100%	Red
Prevention								
Rate of safe and well visits per 1,000 population	High	1.57	1.64	1.75	2.32	Improved	1.59	Green
% safe and well visits undertaken to those deemed vulnerable	High	91.5%	90.6%	89.8%	92.1%	Improved	89%	Green
Rate of dwelling fires per 10,000 population	Low	1.17	1.23	1.23	1.17	Worsened	1.02	Red
Number of fatalaties from all fires	Low	0	0	4	0	Improved	0	Green
Protection								
% annual risk-based inspection programme (RBIPs) audits completed	High	61.2%	72.9%	87.8%	101.7%	Improved	100%	Green

www.glosfire.gov.uk

Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Gloucestershire
Fire and Rescue Service
Working together for a safer Gloucestershire

GFRS_111 10.26