



**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Meeting of the Authority**

**Thursday 29 June 2023**

**10.30am**



**AGENDA**  
**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
**ANNUAL MEETING**

**Thursday 29 June 2023 at 10.30am**

Ask for: Marie Curry  
Telephone: (01622) 692121

Held at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,  
Straw Mill Hill, Tovil, Maidstone ME15 6XB

Membership of Authority for 2023/24:- Newly Appointed Members in **Bold**

Appointed by Kent County Council (21):- Mr P Barrington-King, Mr D Beaney, **Mr A Brady**, Mr A Booth, Mr N Chard, Mr P Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr M Dendor, Mr P Harman, Ms S Hohler, **Mr M Hood**, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr S Manion, Mr J McInroy, **Ms J Meade**, Ms L Parfitt-Read, Mr A Ridgers, Mr C Simkins, Mr M Sole and Mr B Sweetland.

Appointed by Medway Council (4):- Mr B Kemp, Mr V Maple, **Mr M Prenter** and **Ms Z Van-Dyke**

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner:- Mr M Scott

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

**A Routine Business**

- A1. Election of Chair for 2023/24
- A2. Election of Vice-Chair for 2023/24
- A3. Chair's Announcements *(if any)*
- A4. Membership Changes and Apologies for Absence  
*To note the Membership of the Authority (as above), and to receive any apologies for absence.*
- A5. Declarations of Interest in Items on this Agenda
- A6. Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 28 November 2022 *(for information)*
- A7. Minutes of the Meeting of the Authority held on 20 February 2023 *(for approval)*
- A8. Minutes of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee for 21 March 2023 *(for information)*

**B For Decision**

- B1. Review of Proportionality and Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies for 2023/24
- B2. Governance and Policy Update
- B3. External Auditors Annual Report for 2021/22
- B4. Provisional Final Outturn for 2022/23
- B5. Financial Update for 2023/24
- B6. Appointment of Independent Member to Audit and Governance Committee

**C For Information**

- C1. Information Update *(Consolidated Report)*

C2. Operational Incidents of Interest Presentation

**D Urgent Business** (*Other Items which the Chairman decides are Urgent*)

**E Exempt Items**

E1. Motion to Exclude Press and Public

Under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 9 of Schedule 12A of the Act

E2. Channel Tunnel

Marie Curry  
Clerk to the Authority

19 June 2022

*Please note that any background papers referred to in the accompanying reports may be inspected by arrangement with the Lead/Contact Officer named on each report.*

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

---

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on Monday, 28 November 2022 at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, The Godlands, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6XB.

PRESENT: - Mr P Cole, Mr N Collor, Ms S Hudson, Mr V Maple, Mr C Simkins, Mr M Sole and Mr S Tranter.

APOLOGIES: - Mr A Booth, Mr P Harman and Ms C Parfitt-Reid.

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss A Millington QFSM; the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Ms A Kilpatrick; Director Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety, Mr J Quinn; Director Response and Resilience, Mr R Rist; Assistant Director, Operations, Mr M Deadman; Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions, Mrs N Walker; Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions, Mr B Fullbrook and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: - Mr P Cuttle, Grant Thornton and Ms F Smith, Kent County Council (KCC) Internal Audit.

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### 14. Chair's Announcements

*(Item A1)*

- (1) The Chair welcomed Paul Cuttle from Grant Thornton to the meeting
- (2) The Chair welcomed Frankie Smith from KCC Internal Audit to the meeting.

#### 15. Membership

*(Item A2)*

- (1) The Chair welcomed Mike Sole to his first meeting of this Committee.
- (2) The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, gave thanks to Dan Daley for his hard work and dedication not only to this Committee but to the Authority following his recent announcement to stand down.

#### 16. Minutes

*(Item A3)*

- (1) RESOLVED that:
  - (a) The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 22 September 2022 be signed as a true and correct record.

#### 17. Update on Statement of Accounts and Letter of Representation for 2021/22

*(Item B1 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Committee considered a report on the Financial Statements for 2021/22, the audit work that has been undertaken to date as well as the Letter of Representation for 2021/22.
- (2) The Committee requested that the wording within Recommendation 2 of the report be amended (shown in bold) to the following:

*'agree that if any material issues arise in the Financial Statement that **have a major financial impact** to the draft Financial Statements, then an urgent meeting of this Committee will be arranged'.*

- (3) RESOLVED that:
- (a) any minor changes to the draft Financial Statements can be agreed by the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee, be approved.
  - (b) any material issues that arise in the Financial Statements that have a major financial impact to the draft Financial Statements, then an urgent meeting of this Committee will be arranged.
  - (c) the draft Letter of Representation in relation to the 2021/22 accounts, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

**18. External Auditors' Findings Report 2021/22**

*(Item B2 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Committee considered the External Auditors Audit Findings Report in relation to the 2021/22 financial year, in accordance with the requirements of the International Standard on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Mr Paul Cuttle from Grant Thornton, introduced the Audit Findings Report and advised Members that: -
- (a) At the time of drafting the report, there are still several areas that are yet to be concluded in their review, details of which are outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.
  - (b) the External Auditors, subject to completing the outstanding work, expect to issue an unmodified audit report in respect of the Authority's Financial Statements for 2021/22.
  - (c) the External Auditors are yet to complete all of the Value For Money (VFM) work so are not in a position to issue the Auditors' Annual Report. This is expected to be issued by 28 February 2023. This is in line with guidance issued by the National Audit Office, details of which are contained within Appendix 1 to the report.
  - (d) Following a discussion around the increased challenge of assessing valuations against specialised assets and the need for more detailed information to be provided to the Auditors to support their audit, Mr Maple asked whether there was any learning for this Authority in terms of being better prepared and armed with the correct information in advance. In response the Director Finance and Corporate Services agreed and said that now there is that understanding of what type of information is required to support valuations the team can ensure that this is obtained and supplied in advance.
  - (e) The Committee provided their thanks to Paul Cuttle and the External Auditors for the work they have undertaken whilst recognising the difficulties they have faced in doing so. In response Paul Cuttle thanked Members for their comments and also added his thanks to the Director Finance and Corporate Services and her Finance Team for the good quality of workings that were produced. He added that it was unusual for Authorities' Audit Adjustments to be just on one page with very few issues raised.
- (2) RESOLVED that:
- (a) the matters raised in the annual Audit Findings Report for 2021/22, be approved.
  - (b) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

**19. Audit Committee Update**

*(Item B3 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Committee considered a report on the recent review that CIPFA has undertaken with regards to the documentation that supports Audit Committees within the Public Sector which included a new Position Statement, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.
- (2) The Committee also considered an update on the progress made on the procurement exercise undertaken by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of the Authority's External Auditor from 1 April 2023, details of which are attached at Appendix 2 and 3 to the report.
- (3) Mr Tranter said that he fully supports the recruitment of an Independent Member to join the Audit and Governance Committee to ensure that there is that separate voice to which Mr Maple supported.
- (4) RESOLVED that:
  - (a) the new Position Statement issued by CIPFA, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
  - (b) a recommendation be given to the Authority on the recruitment of an Independent Member to sit on the Audit and Governance Committee, be approved.
  - (c) the appointment of Grant Thornton as the Authority's External Auditors, be approved in principle.

**20. Corporate Risk Register**

*(Item B4 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Committee considered the latest update on the Corporate Risk Register.
- (2) RESOLVED that:
  - (a) the amendment to the Risk Register as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
  - (b) the addition of a new risk to the Register in relation to the heavy fleet and vehicle servicing maintenance function being brought in-house, be approved.
  - (c) The contents of the report be noted.

**21. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27**

*(Item B5 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Committee received the draft Treasury Management Strategy for the 2023/24 financial year to considered prior to this being presented to the Authority meeting in February 2023.

(2) RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for the 2023/24 financial year, be approved in principle.

**22. Internal Audit Mid-Year Update 2022/23**

*(Item C1 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) Ms F Smith from KCC Internal Audit, introduced for Members' consideration, the Internal Audit Mid-Year report. The report provided an update on the progress undertaken to date in relation to the 2022/23 Audit Plan which was agreed by Members back in April.
- (2) In response to a question raised by Mr Cole around fraud and security breaches resulting in the need to change passwords, Ms Smith responded by saying that if such situations arose, then Internal Audit, alongside Officers of the Authority would work closely with KCC's Counter Fraud Team on the best course of action needed to address the issue in question.
- (3) RESOLVED that:
  - (a) The contents of the report be noted.



## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

---

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held on Tuesday, 21 February 2023 at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

PRESENT: - Mr A Booth, Mr N Chard (Chair), Mr P Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr D Crow-Brown, Ms M Dawkins, Mr M Dendor, Mr P Harman, Ms S Hohler, Ms S Hudson, Mr S Manion, Mr V Maple, Mr J McInroy, Ms L Parfitt-Reid, Mr C Simkins, Mr M Sole, and Mr S Tranter.

APOLOGIES: - Mr P Barrington-King, Mr D Beaney, Ms K Constantine, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr B Kemp, Mr A Ridgers, Mr R Thorne and Mr B Sweetland.

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss A Millington OBE, QFSM; the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Ms A Kilpatrick; the Director, Response and Resilience, Mr M Rist; Director Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety, Mr J Quinn; Assistant Director, People and Learning, Mrs K Irvine; Assistant Director, Corporate Services, Mr J Finch; Assistant Director, Response, Mr M Deadman; Assistant Director, Resilience, Mr C Else; Assistant Director, Customer and Building Safety, Mr M Woodward; Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions, Mrs N Walker; Head of Finance< Treasury Pensions, Mr B Fullbrook and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: - Mr M Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr B Gill, Monitoring Officer and Mrs J Waterman, Independent Person.

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### 28. Chairman's Announcements

*(Item A1)*

- (1) Members and Officers held a minute's silence as a mark of respect following the death of Firefighter Barry Martin from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- (2) The Chair, on behalf of Members, gave thanks to Mr Rory Love OBE for his contribution to the Authority following the announcement of his standing down and in turn welcomed Mr Bryan Sweetland back on to the Authority.
- (3) Following the Service's recent HMICFRS Inspection results, Kent has emerged as one of the top performing fire services in the Country. Members recorded their thanks to all colleagues at Kent Fire and Rescue Service for their hard work and dedication.
- (4) Members placed on record their thanks to Jim Chaston, Martin Stanley, Bradley Rebbeck from Kent Fire and Rescue Service Technical Rescue Team who were deploy as part of the UK International Search and Rescue Team to the earthquake in Turkey.
- (5) Members placed on record their congratulations to the Service for being ranked one of the top emergency services and among the best organisations in the Country for LGBTQ+ inclusion by Stonewall.
- (6) The Chair reminded Members of the date of this year's Kent Fire and Rescue Service Awards Ceremony.
- (7) Members placed on record their thanks to James Finch, Assistant Director, Corporate Services for his hard work and dedication to the Service for the past 19 years.
- (8) Members gave their sincere congratulations to Chief Executive, Ann Millington, for being awarded an OBE in the King's New Year's Honours.

#### 29. Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee – 22 September 2022

*(Item A4)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 22 September 2022, be noted.

**30. Minutes – 13 October 2022**

*(Item A5)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 13 October 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

**31. Financial Update for 2022/23**

*(Item B1 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Authority considered a report which set out the latest forecast outturn position for the Revenue and Capital Budgets, the forecast on year-end reserve balances and latest treasury position. The report also included a progress update on the redevelopment at Ashford Fire Station and Live Fire Training facility, as well as a proposal for an additional lease of a building for the vehicle servicing and maintenance function.
- (2) Mr Booth thanked the Director Finance and Corporate Services and her team for the excellent way in which the Authority's finances are handled.
- (3) Mr Maple raised his concerns around the time being taken by the External Auditors to complete not only this Authority's financial audits but other public sector authorities too due to their backlog of assessments. Mr Maple asked that, through the Chair of this Authority, the fire sector could collectively go through the LGA to write to the Public Sector Auditor Appointments Body to express their concerns not only around the timeframe but also the increase in auditing fees.
- (4) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the proposal to enter into an additional lease arrangement, as part of the in-house arrangements for the vehicle servicing and maintenance function, be approved in principle.
  - (b) the contents of the report be noted.

**32. Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2023/24 and Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27**

*(Item B2 - Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered a report setting out proposals for its Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax levels for 2023/24; the assumptions used in developing the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2023-27; the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy and related Prudential Indicators; the Reserves Strategy and Capital Strategy.
- (2) The Authority was also requested to note the response to the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 consultation, as attached at Appendix 1.
- (3) Members placed on record their thanks to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and her team for the excellent way in which the Authority's finances are managed especially in what has again been a very challenging year.
- (4) In response to a question raised by Mr Maple about Members being kept updated on the discussions around potential savings, the Chief Executive provided reassurance that this would be the case.
- (5) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the revenue budget proposals and the resulting net budget requirement for 2023/24 of £85,292m, as set out in Appendix 2, be approved.

- (b) a total requirement from Council Tax of £57,689m to be raised through the precept to meet the 2023/24 revenue budget requirements, which requires an increase in Council Tax of 6.01%, resulting in the following annual charges for each Council Tax Band be approved.

<b>Council Tax Band</b>	<b>Annual Charge</b>
A	£58.20
B	£67.90
C	£77.60
<b>D</b>	<b>£87.30</b>
E	£106.70
F	£126.10
G	£145.50
H	£174.60

- (c) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make any late adjustments which may be required to the next revenue budget, arising as a result of any late changes to the Council Tax, Business Rates or Government Funding be approved.
- (d) the Capital Budget of £16.492m for 2023/24 and related expenditure commitments following on in later years, together with the sources of funding identified to fund the expenditure, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
- (e) the Capital Strategy, as attached at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.
- (f) the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, including the appropriate Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 4 to the report, be approved.
- (g) the Reserves Strategy as set out in Appendix 5 to the report, be approved.
- (h) the assumptions being used to develop the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2023-27 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

### **33. Efficiency and Productivity Statement 2023/24**

*(Item B3 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered the Efficiency and Productivity Statement 2023/24. Previously the Authority's Efficiency Statement has been incorporated within the Customer Safety Plan, but it is standalone to give a broader focus on efficiency and productivity, not just value for money.
- (2) In response to a question raised by Mr Maple about the publication of the efficiency document, the Director of Prevention, Protect and Customer Safety explained that the document will be publicly available on the Service's website and that his team will also go through the document to highlight the key areas to communicate through social media networks.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
- (a) The Efficiency and Productivity Statement for 2023/24, as attached at Appendix 1, be approved.

**34. Pay Policy Statement 2023/24**

*(Item B4 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24, which the Authority is required by the Localism Act 2011 to publish before the start of the new financial year.
- (2) Members also considered an addendum to the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 in relation to Special Severance Payments.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) The addendum to the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 in relation to Special Severance Payments, as set out in Part 3 of Appendix 1, be approved.
  - (b) the Authority's draft Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

**35. Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24**

*(Item B5 - Report by Clerk to the Authority)*

- (1) It is a requirement of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 that every local authority must formally adopt a new Members Allowances Scheme each year. The Authority consider the Scheme for 2023/24.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the existing Members' Allowances Scheme, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be formally re-adopted for 2023/24.

**36. Appointment of an Independent Member for the Audit and Governance Committee**

*(Item B6 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Authority considered a report which sought approval to the recruitment of an Independent Member to sit on the Audit and Governance Committee in line with The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's recommended good practice guidance and in line with relevant legislation.
- (2) Mr Maple and Mr Tranter both outlined their support for the recruitment of an Independent Member and the external challenge and scrutiny that it will bring will be a positive approach for the Authority.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the recruitment of an Independent Member to sit on the Audit and Governance Committee, be approved.
  - (b) the advertisement, job description and person specification for the role of Independent Member can be determined by the Audit and Governance Committee, in conjunction with its Terms of Reference, be approved.
  - (c) any recommendation on an appointment of an Independent Member for the Audit and Governance Committee will be brought back to the next Authority meeting for agreement.

**37. Save Safely Campaign – Cost of Living Presentation**

*(Item C1 – Presentation by Area Manager, Customer and Building Safety)*

- (1) A presentation was given to the Authority on the work the Service is doing around the Save Safely Campaign.
- (2) Members thanked Area Manager, Customer and Building Safety for her presentation which was very informative.

- (3) Members requested a copy of the presentation to be sent to them as well as any relevant leaflets or briefing notes on the work of the campaign in order that Members can promote this within their communities. In response to this the Chief Executive welcomed Members' advocacy of this campaign on the various boards they sit on.
- (4) RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

**38. Information Update**

*(Item C2 - Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered information updates on: -
  - A. Inspection Update and National Issues.
  - B. Outcomes of Safety and Wellbeing Plan.
  - C. Performance Update.
  - D. Response and Resilience Update.
  - E. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update.
  - F. Climate Action Plan.
  - G. Freedom of Information Update.
  - H. Insurance Update.
  - I. Pensions Board Update.
- (2) On Item C above and response to a query raised by Mr Harman around the clarity of the wording to describe fire appliance availability during the day, the Chief Executive agreed that this wording will be reviewed in time for the next report.
- (3) On Item D above and in response to a query raised by Mr Maple about planning assumptions for this year based on the Summer of last year, the Director Response and Resilience provided assurances that planning arrangements are in hand so that the Service can respond appropriately and effectively.
- (4) RESOLVED that the contents of the report, and subsequent discussions, be noted.

**EXEMPT ITEMS  
(Open Access to Minutes)**

**39. Abatement**

*(Item E2 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) Members received a report which presented an abatement related issue.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the recommendations contained within the report, be approved.

*This page has been left blank*

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
**SENIOR OFFICER APPOINTMENT AND CONDITIONS COMMITTEE**

---

MINUTES of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee Tuesday, 21 March 2023.

MEMBERS:- Mr N Chard (Chair), Mr V Maple, Mr C Simkins, Mr M Sole and Mr S Tranter (Vice-Chair)

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss A Millington QFSM, Director Finance and Corporate Services, Mrs A Hartley and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

**1. Pay Award for Chief Executive and Directors**

*(Item 1)*

- 1) The Committee received a formal letter that sought approval to the 2022 and 2023 pay awards for the Chief Executive and Directors (Gold Book Managers). Nationally an offer was made for a two-year deal of 4% for 2022 and 3.5% for 2023.
- 2) The three sets of terms and conditions have different start dates (Gold – January; Green – April and Grey – July)
- 3) Given the current financial constraints, it is proposed that these Officers accept 2% for 2022 and 3.5% for 2023.
- 4) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the Chief Executive and Directors are awarded a 2% pay award with effect from 1 January 2022 and 3.5% from 1 January 2023, be approved.

*This page has been left blank*



By: Clerk to the Authority

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 29 June 2023

Subject: REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES 2024/25

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

Following the local elections held across Kent and Medway, both Kent County Council (KCC) and Medway Council have reviewed their political proportionality. As a result, this Authority has now reviewed its own political proportionality, taking into consideration any changes made within KCC and Medway Council and in line with the requirements under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Agree, for the purposes of the statutory review of proportionality, the allocation of Committee places to the political groups (paragraph 2 refers).
2. Agree the size and composition of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee (paragraph 5 and Table 1 refer).
3. Agree the size and political composition of the Audit and Governance Committee (paragraph 6 and Table 1 refer).
4. Agree that whenever a Hearings Panel needs to be convened, it should comprise of six Members, each of which should be nominated by the relevant Group Leader (paragraph 7 refers).
5. Agree the proposed appointments to outside bodies (paragraph 8 and Table 2 refers).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Clerk to the Authority – Marie Curry

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext 8291

EMAIL: marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Background

1. The Authority is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review its scheme of proportionality at its Annual Meeting each year, and as soon as practical after any occasion on which the political composition of the Authority changes. The Act requires places on Committees (both overall and within each Committee) to be allocated in proportion to the political composition of the Authority as a whole (subject to the majority group on the Authority being entitled to have a majority on every Committee) unless the Authority decides, without any Member voting against it, to adopt some other arrangement.
2. As a result of the recent elections within Kent and Medway and the subsequent review of proportionality by both Kent County Council and Medway Council, the changes to the political composition of this Authority will change to: -  
**Conservative 17 (from 20); Labour 5 (increased from 3);  
Green and Independents 2 (increased from 1); Liberal Democrat 1 (remains the same).**
3. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner is also considered as a member of this Authority but is not accounted for within the terms for political proportionality.
4. As the political composition of the Authority has now changed, the Greens and Independents will be entitled to form a political group in line with The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, and the sizes and composition of the Authority's Committees will need to change in order to reflect the new proportionality.

### Appointments of Members to Serve on Committees

5. The Authority has two Committees subject to the proportionality rules which are the Audit and Governance Committee and the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee (SOAC). Previously the Authority has agreed that, because of the nature of the business that SOAC conducts (interviewing and appointing candidates for the most senior appointments) it was an advantage for this Committee's membership to be smaller than strictly proportionate, whilst still giving the majority party a major seat on the Committee. Members are therefore requested to agree to continue to retain a small SOAC composition in line with reference 2.6 of the Standing Orders and as such this is detailed in **Table 1** below.
6. In terms of the Audit and Governance Committee, Members will be appointed to serve on this Committee by the Clerk, following discussion and nomination by the Group Leaders which is in line with the requirements of the Act. Members are again

requested to approve the size and political composition of the Audit and Governance Committee as shown in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Conservatives</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Green and Independents</b>	<b>Lib Dems</b>	<b>Other</b>
Authority	<b>25 (100%)</b>	17 (68%)	5 (20%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	PCC
Audit and Governance Committee	<b>11 (10)</b>	7 (6.8)	2	1 (0.8)	0 (0.4)	(1) Independent Member
Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions	<b>6</b>	3	1	1	1	0

7. There is one other Member body which does not have to be taken into account in the statutory review of proportionality and that is the Hearings Panel. The role of a Hearings Panel is to hear cases in relation to allegations made against any member that may have breached the Code of Conduct or appeals made by any staff member against certain disciplinary and pensions decisions. Panels are called on the infrequent occasions when they are required. Membership is not fixed and can vary from Panel to Panel, but each party representative will be nominated by the relevant Group Leader. Therefore, it is proposed that the Panel comprises of (3 Conservatives, 1 Labour, 1 Green and Independent and 1 Lib Dem). This takes into consideration the recent changes to the membership of this Authority and its political composition.

#### **Representation on Outside Bodies**

8. It is proposed that the Authority continues its representation on the LGA General Assembly and the LGA Fire Commission and as such Members are requested to agree the allocation of places and voting rights, as shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2**

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Green and Independents</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>
<b>LGA General Assembly</b>	Mr N Chard  <i>(1 Corporate Vote and 14 Votes on Fire Issues)</i>	No Rep	Peter Harman	Mike Sole
<b>LGA Fire Commission</b> (Two Members normally the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority)	Mr N Chard (Chair)  Barry Kemp (Vice-Chair)			

### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9. The Green and Independents are entitled to form a political group and will thus become eligible to receive Special Responsibility Allowances in accordance with the review of the Authority's Member Allowances Scheme. Any financial costs associated with this will be contained within existing budgets.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10. Members are requested to approve that:
- 10.1 Agree, for the purposes of the statutory review of proportionality, the allocation of Committee places to the political groups (paragraph 2 refers).
- 10.2. Agree the size and composition of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee (paragraph 5 and Table 1 refer).
- 10.3. Agree the size and political composition of the Audit and Governance Committee (paragraph 6 and Table 1 refer).
- 10.4. Agree that whenever a Hearings Panel needs to be convened, it should comprise of six Members each of which should be nominated by the relevant Group Leader (paragraph 7 refers).
- 10.5. Agree the proposed appointments to outside bodies (paragraph 8 and Table 2 refers).

By: Chief Executive  
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 29 June 2023  
Subject: GOVERNANCE AND POLICY UPDATE  
Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

This report covers the following governance issues:

- A.** Review of the Authority's Constitutional Documents
- B.** Code of Corporate Governance
- C.** Legislative Update
- D.** Policy Update

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the proposed amendments to the Authority's constitutional documents, paragraphs 1 and 2 and **Appendices 1 - 4** refers).
2. Note the Terms of Reference for the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee, paragraph 2 and **Appendix 5** refers).
3. Approve the Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains Statement for 2022/23, paragraph 6 and **Appendix 6** refers)
4. Note the remaining contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: See each section

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL:

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

## COMMENTS

### A. Constitutional Changes

Lead/Contact Officer: Marie Curry – Clerk to the Authority

Tel: 01622 692121 ext 8291 [marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org)

1. The Authority's main constitutional documents have not been reviewed for a number of years. As a result, these documents have now undergone a refresh and amended where necessary to ensure that they are updated to reflect any changes that have arisen since they were last reviewed.
2. Draft Revisions to the Standing Orders, the Scheme of Delegations of Powers to the Chief Executive, Guidance on Issues to be Considered by the Authority and the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Audit and Governance Committee, showing suggested amendments or deletions, are attached at **Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4** respectively for Members' approval. These documents, if approved, will form part of the Members Handbook alongside other relevant governance documentation. Attached at **Appendix 5** is the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions (SOAC) Committee's Terms of Reference. These ToRs have been reviewed and there are no proposed changes but are included for Members' information.

### Kent Code of Conduct

3. Back in 2020, the Local Governance Association (LGA) conducted a consultation into a revision to its Model Code of Conduct for Members. This was carried out in response to recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life's review into Local Governance Ethical Standards. The Kent Code is not just a Kent County Council Code but is adopted by the majority of Boroughs and District Councils in Kent as well as this Authority.
4. The Kent Secretaries Group and the Kent County Council Standards Committee are currently considering potential amendments to the Code and as such we wait to hear the outcome of this before bringing back to this Authority any suggested amendments.

### B. Code of Corporate Governance

Lead/Contact Officer: Owain Thompson – Head of Policy, Customer Services

Tel: 01622 692121 ext 8453, [owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org)

5. The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance was reviewed following the publication of updated guidance by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and approved by Members at the meeting of the Authority on 23 July 2020. The principles set out in the CIPFA governance framework (themselves based on the Nolan Principles of standards in public life) are embedded in the Authority through its Code of Corporate Governance. The Code sets out the seven key principles of good governance which the Authority has adopted and the means by which these principles

are adhered to and evidenced. The Code will be reviewed this year to ensure that it remains current and continues to reflect the requirements of CIPFA's governance framework, including the CIPFA Financial Management Code. It will be cross-referenced to the Annual Governance Statement and brought to the September meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee for Members' approval.

### **C. Legislative update**

*Lead/Contact Officer: Owain Thompson, Head of Policy, Customer Services*

*Tel: 01622 692121 ext 8453, [owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org)*

### **Procurement**

6. The Procurement Team has prepared the Authority's 'Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains Statement' for 2022/23. This sets out the steps taken by the Authority during this period to ensure that modern slavery does not form a part of any of our supply chains. The statement is published in accordance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Transparency in Supply Chains) Regulations 2015. The Statement is attached at **Appendix 6** for Members' consideration and approval.

### **Data Protection**

7. Alison Hartley (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) has been appointed as the Senior Information Risk Owner for the Authority.
8. Owain Thompson (Head of Policy) has been appointed as the Data Protection Officer for the Authority.
9. The Data Protection and Digital Information Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 18 July 2022. The Bill was scheduled to have its second reading on 5 September 2022. However, in a Business Statement on that date, the Government said that, following the election of Elizabeth Truss as Conservative Party leader, the second reading would not take place as scheduled to allow Ministers to consider the Bill further. The Bill was withdrawn on 8 March 2023. The Data Protection and Digital Information Bill (No. 2) Bill was introduced on the same date. Much of the new Bill is the same as the withdrawn one.
10. The current bill has now had its first and second reading (on 8 March and 17 April respectively) and is now at the Committee Stage where detailed examination of the Bill will take place. Following this it will return to the floor of the House of Commons for its report stage, where the amended Bill will have its third reading, be debated and further amendments proposed, prior to going to the House of Lords for first reading. Depending on how this progresses it is possible that it will receive Royal Assent before the end of this calendar year.

11. The key proposals set out within the Bill are as follows:
  - Requirement to implement a 'Privacy Management Programme'
  - Removal of Data Protection Officers (DPOs) and replacement with a 'Senior Responsible Individual'.
  - Removal of requirement for Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs)
  - Removal of requirement for records of processing activities
  - Adopting the existing provisions on how data breaches are reported to the Information Commissioner into the new Bill
  - Adopting the existing provisions on how Subject Access Requests are to be processed
  - Refreshed guidance on the use of cookies on websites
  - Reform of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and replacement with the Information Commission
  
12. The move to diverge from the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) is motivated by a desire to try to make the UK more attractive to businesses and boost medical/scientific research sectors through removing barriers to accessing and processing personal data. However, many companies, organisations and institutions have adopted (EU) GDPR as their global default, so there may be little incentive to take advantage of any UK divergence.
  
13. Moreover, if the UK weakens its data protection law too much, weakens the compliance requirements for small companies, or signs data sharing deals with countries with less strict data protection laws, then the EU could consider removing the UK's adequacy status, which could have potentially serious implications for European data flows and an associated increase in cost for businesses and academia. The adequacy status will lapse in 2025 unless specifically renewed.

## **Other Bills**

14. The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill. The bill is currently being considered by the House of Lords. If it is passed, it is expected to come into force on December 31, 2023. The following are some of the key provisions of the bill:
  - The bill would revoke most legislation implementing EU law in the UK.
  - The bill would give the UK Parliament the power to repeal or amend EU law as it sees fit.
  - The bill would create a sunset clause that would allow for the automatic repeal of any retained EU law that is not specifically preserved by Parliament.
  - The bill would establish a new body, the Office for the Revocation of EU Law, to oversee the implementation of the bill.



15. The bill is expected to have a significant impact on the UK's legal system. It is likely to lead to a period of uncertainty and instability as businesses and individuals adjust to the new legal landscape.

**D. Policy update**

*Owain Thompson, Head of Policy, Customer Services*

*Tel: 01622 692121 ext 8543, [owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org)*

16. In order to ensure that they remain up-to-date and effective, the Authority's policies are revised as required based on a variety of factors, which may include changes to legislation, changes to procedures and practices, and the scheduled policy review dates. The table below summarises the policies that have been revised or undergone review since the last meeting of the Authority. Please note that while the Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) Policy has not been changed, there has been an expansion of the types of premises attended prior to confirmation of a fire. This has been highlighted for Members' information.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) Policy	Expansion of premises attended prior to confirmation of a fire. No change to policy wording required as the amendments relate to the underlying operational guidance and mobilising system.
Smoke Alarm Policy	Updated to V3. Clarification of some procedural points related to returning alarms and updates to wording on alarms in sheltered or supported schemes.
Pay and Other Payments for Corporate Colleagues Policy	Updated to V3. New section referring to the relocation assistance covered by the Recruitment and Selection Policy.
Flexible Working Policy	Updated to V7. Revised to add two-month consideration period, renamed Business Partner to HR, and remove business benefit section.
Modern Slavery Policy	Updated to V3 after scheduled review. No change to policy wording.
Flag Policy	Updated to V7 to incorporate updated flag flying protocol relating to HM The King.

17. In addition, a review of the Authority's entire suite of privacy notices has been completed. As a result of this, there are now 32 revised and updated privacy notices and 16 'Appropriate Policy Documents'. The need for an Appropriate Policy Document is an additional requirement under the Data Protection Act 2018 when processing Article 9 special category data under the '(b) Employment, social security and social protection condition; or '(g) Reasons of substantial public interest'

condition. This was undertaken to ensure that our privacy notices continue to meet the requirements of the UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and the Data Protection Act 2018, to set out our responsibilities and lawful bases for processing personal data and the rights of data subjects whose data is being processed.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

18. There are no direct impacts from the contents of this paper which cannot be contained within existing budgetary provision. A people impact assessment has been completed for each policy referenced in this report. There are a range of data associated with each policy which, if falling within the scope of the Equality Act 2010 will be appropriately protected by the Authority. It is important that the Authority has strong processes in place to protect customers, and colleagues have confidence in using these policies.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

19. Members are requested to:
  - 19.1 Approve the proposed amendments to the Authority's constitutional documents, paragraphs 1 and 2 and **Appendices 1 - 4** refers).
  - 19.2 Note the Terms of Reference for the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee, paragraph 2 and **Appendix 5** refers).
  - 19.3 Approve the Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains Statement for 2022/23, paragraph 6 and **Appendix 6** refers)
  - 19.4 Note the remaining contents of the report.

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### STANDING ORDERS

#### 1. PREAMBLE

The Authority is constituted under the Kent Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997. The Order requires that the 25 Members of the Authority should be appointed by the two constituent authorities, Kent County Council and Medway Council, and in proportion to their respective local government electorates. This results in 21 Members being appointed by Kent County Council and 4 by Medway Council. Members of the Authority are required to undertake to observe the provisions of the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members in the performance of their functions in that office.

#### 2. ORGANISATION OF THE AUTHORITY

- 2.1 The Authority shall normally meet ~~four~~three times a year, but additional meetings may be held as the Authority decides. Meetings shall normally be held at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters unless otherwise published.
- 2.2 The Authority may appoint Committees to carry out any aspect of its business except that the decisions on the annual budget and the amount of council tax to be charged each year shall only be taken at a full meeting of the Authority.
- 2.3 The Authority shall determine the size and political composition of its Committees and Panels, and Members shall be appointed to serve on these Committees and Panels by the Clerk, on the nomination of the appropriate political group(s).
- 2.4 Committees shall decide the time, date and place of their meetings.
- 2.5 Committees may not appoint Sub-Committees without the consent of the Authority.
- 2.6 All matters relating to the appointment and terms and conditions of employment of the Chief Executive and such other employees as the Authority may determine shall be dealt with by a Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee, whose Chairman shall be the Chairman of the Authority.
- 2.7 Appeals against officer decisions on individual employees' disciplinary, grievance and pension cases, shall be dealt with by an Appeals Panel, comprised of Members who have had no previous involvement with the case concerned.
- 2.8 The Authority shall elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman at its annual meeting which

shall normally be held ~~in May or in~~ June or July each year, and each Committee shall elect a ~~Chairman~~ and Vice-~~Chairman~~ at its first meeting after the Authority's annual meeting each year.

- 2.9 A casual vacancy in an office of ~~Chairman~~ or Vice-~~Chairman~~ of the Authority or one of its ~~C~~committees shall be filled at the next meeting of the body concerned.
- 2.10 The ~~Chairman~~, or in his or her absence, the Vice-~~Chairman~~, of the Authority shall preside at all meetings of the Authority.
- 2.11 If both the ~~Chairman~~ and Vice-~~Chairman~~ are absent from a meeting of the Authority then a ~~Chairman~~ for the meeting shall be elected from those Members present.
- 2.12 If both the ~~Chairman~~ and Vice-~~Chairman~~ of a Committee are absent from a meeting of the Committee then a ~~Chairman~~ for the meeting shall be elected from those Members present.
- 2.13 The quorum for a meeting of the Authority shall be one-third of the total number of Members including at least one Member from each of the constituent authorities. The quorum for a meeting of a Committee shall be one half, or in the case of a Committee comprising an odd number, the nearest whole number above one half of the appointed Members.
- 2.14 Any Member of the Authority may attend any meeting of a Committee except that a Committee considering an item of business that is exempt because it relates to the personal affairs of an individual employee, or past or prospective employee, may resolve to exclude Members other than Members of that Committee.
- 2.15 Members exercising their right to attend a meeting under Standing Order 2.14, shall not be entitled to vote and may speak only with the permission of the ~~Chairman~~.
- 2.16 Members of Committees may appoint substitutes to attend Committee meetings in their place in accordance with a scheme approved by the Authority. Substitutes are not permitted at full Authority meetings.
- 2.17 All meetings of the Authority and its Committees shall be convened by the Clerk or ~~his/her~~their representative, who shall issue the official documents for Members' consideration. The documents shall normally be dispatched to Members at least five working days before the meeting.
- 2.18 Any Member of the Authority wishing to include an item on the agenda for a meeting must give notice of it to the Clerk ten days before the meeting. Items must be relevant to the functions of the Authority.

2.19 Business that is not specified in the agenda for a meeting may not be introduced without the consent of the Chair~~man~~. Where the Chair~~man~~ decides that there are special circumstances, an item of business not included on the agenda may be considered as a matter of urgency as long as the reason is specified at the time and in the Minutes.

2.20 All Members who attend a meeting of the Authority or a Committee shall sign their names in the attendance record for the meeting or otherwise ensure that their attendance is recorded by the Clerk.

### 3. MOTIONS

3.1 Motions and amendments shall be formally proposed and seconded. They must be worded so that the meeting, if it agrees, can pass them as valid resolutions. If they are not then the Chair~~man~~ shall rule them out of order.

a) Motions shall be relevant to the item of business under discussion. They must not seek to rescind in whole or in part any resolution passed within the previous six months.

b) This Standing Order shall not preclude the Chair~~man~~ of the meeting from proposing a motion nor the Chief Executive, Clerk or Treasurer from recommending decisions made necessary by changed circumstances since a previous decision was taken.

3.2 If requested by the Chair~~man~~, the proposer of a motion or amendment must give a written copy of it to the Clerk.

3.3 A proposer may withdraw or change a motion or amendment, provided this is agreed by the seconder at the meeting and the meeting consents. A motion may not be withdrawn or changed while a proposed amendment is undecided.

3.4 During the debate of a motion or amendment no other substantive motion may be put.

3.5 No amendment shall be proceeded with:-

a) Unless it is relevant to, and consistent with, the motion on which it is moved.

b) If it would result in the introduction of a new subject or subjects.

c) If it would effectively negate the motion before the meeting.

- d) If it would have the effect of rescinding a previous resolution.
  - e) If the proposer of the original motion has exercised his or her right of reply.
- 3.6 If an amendment is rejected, further amendments may be proposed on the original motion.
- 3.7 If an amendment is carried, it shall take the place of the original motion and become the substantive motion. This revised motion may be subject to proposals for further amendment provided that they do not revive the original motion.
- 3.8 No further proposals for amendments shall be permitted if an amendment is already before the meeting but has not been dealt with.
- 3.9 If an amendment is not carried, and there are no further amendments, the substantive motion shall be put to the meeting.
- 3.10 Members shall speak no more than once on any report, motion or amendment unless invited to do so by the Chair~~man~~ or unless they wish to:-
- a) Speak on a point of order, that is a suggestion that a provision of these standing orders or of the law governing the Authority's proceedings is being breached.
  - b) Make a personal explanation.
  - c) Propose or second, without further speaking, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item of business.
  - ~~d)~~ d) Exercise a right of reply. (Note: The right of reply does not give the proposer of a motion the right to speak more than once on each amendment).

3.11 The seconder of a motion or an amendment may reserve ~~his or her~~their speech until later in the debate on that motion or amendment provided ~~he or she~~they declares their intention to do so. This right lapses if not claimed before the reply by the proposer of the motion.

3.12 The following shall apply:-

- a) Any Member, except the proposer or seconder or a Member who has already spoken on a motion or amendment under consideration, may move that “the question now be put” or that consideration be deferred.
- b) No debate is permitted on a motion that “the question now be put”. Once proposed and seconded the Chair~~man~~ must put it to the vote immediately.
- c) If a motion that consideration be deferred is proposed and seconded, a Member who has seconded the motion or amendment under discussion and who has reserved ~~his or her~~their speech may speak; the proposer of the motion may then speak to the motion to defer. No other Member may speak and the Chair~~man~~ must then put the deferral motion to the vote.
- d) If a motion “that the question now be put” is carried, a Member who has seconded a motion or amendment under discussion but who has reserved his or her speech may speak; the proposer of the motion may then exercise his or her right of reply. No other Member may speak and the Chair~~man~~ must then put the motion or amendment to the vote.

3.13 If a motion is amended, the proposer of the successful amendment shall not have a right of reply.

3.14 A Member who proposes a motion shall have a right of reply at the end of the debate on each amendment and immediately before the motion is put to the vote. In exercising that right of reply the Member may only comment on points made during the debate. (Note: The proposer of an amendment to a motion does not have a right of reply to the debate on the amendment).

#### **4 DECISIONS AND VOTING**

4.1 A decision may be taken by consensus, the Chair~~man~~ stating his or her understanding of the consensus of the meeting. If any Member requests, the question shall be decided by a show of hands by a majority of voting

Members present. Immediately after a vote has been taken any Member may ask that the way he or she voted shall be recorded in the Minutes. If one-third of the Members present so request, the way all Members voted shall be recorded.

- 4.2 If the votes for and against are equal, the Chair~~man~~ shall have a second or casting vote.

## **5 CONDUCT AT MEETINGS**

- 5.1 Members shall recognise the authority of the Chair~~man~~ for the conduct of the meeting.

- 5.2 Members shall address the Chair~~man~~ when speaking. Speeches must be relevant to the matter under discussion.

- 5.3 The Chair~~man~~ may call a Member to order and direct him or her to stop speaking if the Chair~~man~~ considers that Member's behaviour to be unacceptable.

- 5.4 If a Member disregards the authority or ruling of the Chair~~man~~, the Chair~~man~~ may propose "that the Member (named) leave the meeting". The motion must be seconded by another Member, and put to the vote without discussion. If it is carried, the named Member must immediately leave the room.

- 5.5 If a Member of the public interrupts a meeting, or otherwise behaves improperly or offensively, the Chair~~man~~ may, as he or she thinks fit, request that person to leave the meeting room and, if necessary, order his or her removal. In the event of a general disturbance, the Chair~~man~~ may direct that the public be excluded from the meeting room. Nobody so removed or excluded will be permitted to return to the meeting.

- 5.6 No matter relating to a particular officer or employee of the Authority shall be discussed at a meeting of the Authority or a Committee until the meeting has decided whether or not to exclude the press and public under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 5.7 Reporting on or recording of a public meeting of the Authority or Committee by members of the press or public is allowed, provided it is done in accordance with the Authority's Regulations on the Rights of the Public to Report on Meetings (*published on the Authority's website*).



5.8 The Chairman's ruling on the interpretation and application of these Standing Orders at meetings is final. This includes a ruling on any point of order or explanation.

## 6 INTERESTS

6.1 If any Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (as defined in the statutory Regulations made under the Localism Act 2011) or an Other Significant Interest (as defined by the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members) in any matter being considered at a meeting of the Authority or one of its Committees or Panels, ~~he or she~~they must act in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct.

6.2 Where a Member is present at a meeting of the Authority or one of its Committees or Panels, and has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Significant Interest in any matter being considered at that meeting, ~~they~~ ~~he or she~~ must withdraw from the meeting room while the matter is being discussed or voted upon, unless:-

- a) a dispensation for the Member concerned in respect of the interest is in effect;
- b) the Member has only an ~~o~~Other ~~s~~Significant ~~i~~nterest in a matter and wishes to make representations, answer questions or give evidence on that matter at the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

## 7 ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

7.1 No Member may disclose to a third party any Authority business or document which is exempt or confidential.

7.2 Members have a right to see such documents as are reasonably necessary to enable them to carry out their duties as Members of the Authority on a "need to know" basis so long as they have no improper or extraneous intentions in so doing.

7.3 Where a Member has asked to see any document and the request has been refused ~~he or she~~they should seek advice on ~~his or her~~their right of access from the Clerk. If the matter cannot be resolved the Clerk will report to the Authority.

7.4 No Member shall ask to inspect any document which relates to a matter

in which ~~he or she~~ they ~~have~~ has a personal or prejudicial interest.

## **8 VALIDATION OF DOCUMENTS**

- 8.1 The Common Seal of the Authority shall be affixed (and witnessed) to any document that requires to be sealed for the purpose of the transaction of the Authority's business only if it has been authorised by resolution of the Authority, or by the exercise of a function delegated to the Chief Executive, Clerk or Treasurer of the Authority. The affixing of the Common Seal will be attested by the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Clerk or Treasurer or some other person authorised by them, provided that in any transaction relating to land to which The Regulatory Reform (Execution of Deeds and Documents) Order 2005 applies, the Common Seal shall be attested by a Member of the Authority and an authorised signatory.
- 8.2 The Chief Executive, Clerk or Treasurer or any other officer duly authorised in writing by them may sign any agreement or other document not required to be executed under Seal, provided the matter has been approved by the Authority or an employee exercising a function delegated to the Chief Executive, Clerk or Treasurer.

## **9 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

- 9.1 The Authority or a Committee may suspend any of these Standing Orders relating to the procedure to be followed in considering any specific item of business; any such suspension to be the subject of a motion put to a formal vote of the body concerned.

*Adopted by Resolution of the Authority on 15 December 1997 and amended by the Authority on [29 June 2023](#)  
~~11 June 1998, 23 September 2004, 10 November 2005, 16 February 2011, 17 October 2012 and 16 October 2014.~~*

## KENT & MEDWAY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

### SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF POWERS TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- 1.1 The Chief Executive is authorised to act on behalf of and exercise all the powers of the Authority, except for those matters listed in paragraph 1.2 below, provided that any such action is in accordance with relevant legislation; the policies laid down by the Authority (including its Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Procurement Regulations) and the Authority's approved budget.
- 1.2 The following matters are specifically reserved for decision by the Authority or, if the Authority so decides, a Committee established by it:-
- a) Determination of the Authority's budget and of the council tax level to be set but subject to the provisions of paragraph 2.2 of the Authority's Standing Orders.
  - b) The policy on the establishment and use of reserves and the agreement to the setting and revision of the Authority's prudential indicators for capital financing.
  - c) All matters relating to the appointment, and terms and conditions of employment, of the Chief Executive and such other employees as the Authority may specify under Standing Order 2.6.
  - d) Consideration of any report of any formal assessment of the Authority as part of any national performance assessment scheme.
  - e) Payment for services to anyone not a member of the Service under Section 15 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
  - f) Consideration of the Authority's ~~Corporate Plan, Safety Plan (formerly the Integrated Risk Management Plan) Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and associated consultation documents~~ and the External Auditors' Management Letter to the Authority.
  - g) Consideration of any powers conferred on the Authority by new legislation so that the Authority may confirm or otherwise the reservation of those powers to itself or to a Committee established by it.
  - h) Budget adjustments for amounts over £500k.
  - i) ~~The sale of land or buildings where the value is over £100k, and any purchase of land or buildings. The sale or purchase of land or buildings where the individual value of the asset is over £100k~~
  - j) The writing-off of bad debts over £10k.
  - k) The entering-into of Leases or Licences for a period of more than five years with third parties for the use of KMFRA land or property, or for the use by KMFRA of the third party's land or property.

- 1.3 Before awarding any contract with a value of £5m or over, the Chief Executive is required to consult the Chair~~man~~ of the Authority or, in ~~his or her~~their absence, the Vice-Chair~~man~~ or other Member nominated by the Chair~~man~~.
- 1.4 If the Chief Executive considers it appropriate, or if the Chair~~man~~ (or, in ~~their~~his or her absence, the Vice-Chair~~man~~) of the Authority or of the Committee with the appropriate power so requests, any action by the Chief Executive in exercise of these delegated powers shall be referred to the Authority or the appropriate Committee.
- 1.5 In cases of genuine urgency where it is not possible to obtain a timely decision from the Authority or a Committee established by it with the relevant powers, the Chief Executive is empowered to take action on matters not delegated to ~~them~~him or her subject to the following:-
  - a) Such action only to be taken after consulting the Chair~~man~~ (or in ~~their~~his or her absence the Vice-Chair~~man~~) of the Authority or of the relevant Committee.
  - b) Any such action to be the subject of a report to the next available meeting of the Authority or the relevant Committee.
- 1.6 All references to the Chief Executive in these delegations shall be taken to include ~~the relevant~~the relevant Director when that officer is required to act in the absence of the Chief Executive or otherwise on the Chief Executive's behalf.
- 1.7 The Chief Executive may authorise any employee of the Authority to exercise any of the powers delegated to the Chief Executive by the Authority.

*Adopted by Resolution of the Authority on 15 December 1997 and latest amendments agreed by the Authority on ~~29 June 2023~~, ~~23 September 2004~~, ~~16 February 2005~~, ~~15 June 2006~~, ~~16 February 2011~~ and ~~16 October 2014~~.*

## KENT & MEDWAY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

### GUIDANCE ON ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE AUTHORITY

1. To determine the Authority's budget and the council tax level to be set, subject to the provisions of paragraph 2.2 of the Authority's Standing Orders.
2. To agree the Authority's key objectives and priorities, and any new policies or amendments to existing policies requiring formal agreement, other than those specifically remitted to Committees.
3. To agree the Authority's Corporate Plan and Safety Plan, Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and other related governance documentation
4. To consider any report of any formal assessment of the Authority under any national or regional performance assessment scheme, and any reports relating to formal assessment processes.
5. To consider any powers conferred on the Authority by new legislation so that the Authority may confirm the reservation of those powers to itself or to a Committee established by it, or their delegation to an officer of the Authority.
6. To agree the Committee structure and the terms of reference for the Authority, its and its Committees and Member Champions;
- ~~7. To agree the to appoint of Members to serve on Committees and outside bodies, and as Member Champions.~~
- ~~87.~~ To agree arrangements for the appointment of the Independent Person (Standards) as required.
8. To agree the appointment of the Independent Member to serve on the Authority's Audit and Governance Committee
- ~~98.~~ To consider any matters referred to it by any committee of the Authority.

~~Last approved by the Authority on 16 October 2013. Latest version approved by the Authority on 29 June 2023~~

*This page has been left blank*

## Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference

### Statement of Purpose

The Audit and Governance Committee will be a key component of KMFRA's corporate governance. It will provide an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.

The purpose of this Committee is to provide independent assurance to the Authority of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It will provide an independent review of KMFRA's governance, risk management and control frameworks and will oversee the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It will also oversee internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

### Governance, Risk and Control

1. To approve the Authority's corporate governance arrangements against the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) good governance framework, including the ethical framework and consider the local Code of Corporate Governance.
2. To review the financial Annual Governance Statement (AGS) prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the ~~council's~~ Authority's framework of governance, risk management and control.
3. To consider the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
4. To approve the Authority's framework of governance assurance (excl Operational assurance) and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Authority.
5. To monitor and approve the effective development and operation of fraud and risk management in the Authority.
6. To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
7. To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

## Internal Audit

8. To approve the Internal Audit Charter.
9. To approve proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.
10. To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
11. To consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing of the head of internal audit. To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
12. To consider reports from the Head of Internal Audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
  - To consider the Head of Internal Audit's Annual report:
  - To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
  - To receive reports outlining the action taken where the head of internal audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the Authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
13. To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the Annual Governance Statement, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

## External Audit

14. Consider the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA).
15. To consider the external auditor's Audit Plan, Audit Findings Report and Annual letter.
16. To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.

## Financial Reporting

17. To consider the Audit Risk Assessment, review of accounting policies and the basis of accounting estimates and assumptions applied by management



18. To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Authority.
19. To consider the Authority's Treasury Strategy, Mid-year Treasury Update and Treasury Outturn Report

### **Accountability Arrangements**

20. To report annually to those charged with governance on the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions.

| *Agreed by the Authority on 27 April 2021 and amended on 29 June 2023*

*This page has been left blank*

**KENT & MEDWAY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SENIOR OFFICER APPOINTMENT AND CONDITIONS COMMITTEE**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. To consider and make decisions on behalf of the Authority, as they affect the Chief Executive and Directors, on the following:
  - a) terms and conditions of employment, including remuneration framework;
  - b) selection and appointment process;
2. To consider and make decisions on behalf of the Authority on the appraisal of the Chief Executive and to act as “grandparent” to the Directors.

*Last approved by the Authority on 13 June 2013.*

*In accordance with Standing Order 2.6 the Committee will be chaired by the Chair of the Authority.*

*This page has been left blank*

# Modern slavery and transparency in supply chains statement 2022/23

*This statement sets out the steps taken during 2022/23 by Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and is published in in line with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Transparency in Supply Chains) Regulations 2015.*

## What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is a serious crime being committed across the UK in which victims are exploited for someone else's gain. It can take many forms including trafficking of people, forced labour and servitude.

It is a very real and present threat to our society and is sadly all around us, but often hidden from sight and difficult to spot. Many victims also do not identify that way.

We share the actions we have taken so far in this statement.

## Our ambition

Since the Modern Slavery Act became law live police operations have increased significantly.

The number of referrals is increasing. 2021 saw the highest number in the UK since records began, with nearly half the cases being children.

12,727 potential victims were referred to the Home Office in 2021.<sup>1</sup>

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), globally, 49.6 million people lived in modern slavery in 2021. 27.6 million in forced labour.<sup>2</sup>

10 million innocent people were moved out of their homes overnight as a result of the crisis in Ukraine. Despite global humanitarian support, it is thought that many may have fallen victim to traffickers on border crossings.

Changes in personal circumstances here in the UK because of the cost-of-living crisis sadly could also lead to an increase in victims of this crime. Households that have been pushed into poverty are more susceptible to being exploited.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary, 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2021)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms\\_854733.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_854733.pdf)

Measuring the true impact may not be possible as victims fear homelessness, deportation, or starvation if they speak out.

Protection and prevention are central to everything we do at Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (the authority). Together with our partners and suppliers we take our responsibility seriously. Driving the change that we all want to see happen. Every member of our organisation can act on any concerns they identify. Together we are working towards a world that is free of slavery, persecution, and exploitation.

This statement shares what we have done so far. It also details our commitment on what we will do to help combat this offence. We are focussed on where we can make a difference and we are proud that we have made a good start. We know that there is still much to do, and it will take time to stamp out modern slavery.

## **Who are we?**

Every minute of every day, we are here to save lives and make our county even safer. We are a forward thinking, modern fire and rescue service with a long and proud history. Together with our customers we are creating a safer future for Kent and Medway.

Helping to keep people safe in their homes, where they work and in places of education. We are there for our customers when needed – whether it is a fire, a road crash, or a water rescue.

The service is formed of over 1,447 members of our team. We have 55 fire stations, a training centre, control centre and service headquarters all within Kent and Medway. We also have around 50 volunteers available to support customers.

Prevention from harm is a big part of what we do. We have 21 Safe and Well officers who give a reassuring service to both the public and any member of our teams who may have encountered someone identified either through operational incidents or home fire safety visits as being 'at risk.' The team works closely with other agencies such as social services, mental health teams, local

authorities, housing associations and the police. Together they put high risk intervention measures in place, often at very short notice.

11,228 safe and well visits and 7,588 home fire safety visits were made in Kent and Medway throughout 22/23.

We also have 21 designated safeguarding officers (DSOs) with 11 of these out of hours. Our internal and external safeguarding processes make sure the service helps to protect the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk as our teams meet them during their work. We have a safeguarding policy and guidance that includes activities that are undertaken to protect specific children, young people and adults who are suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse harm or neglect. Our teams have raised 634 safeguarding cases between April 2011 and March 2023.

Our customer promise sets out our commitment to all customers. Working with them we aim to create a safer future for Kent and Medway. We promise to give excellent, personalised and accessible services. We also promise to maintain our customers trust and to work with our customers to keep improving. Our promise, in many ways, is in line with our ambition included within this statement.

We are committed to a culture of listening and understanding to encourage everyone to be curious and compassionate. We have internal and external whistleblowing routes for colleagues to raise concerns to prevent and identify harm. This culture and practice not only help us all to value difference and be kind it means we are able to identify when someone is at risk of harm.

We don't just comply with the relevant laws and practices on how we should treat colleagues, customers and anyone who comes into contact with our organisation. We extend our role beyond compliance by making sure we do not tolerate discrimination in our business practices, or the behaviours of anyone within our organisation or networks.

You can find out more information on [who we are](#) and [what we do](#) elsewhere on this website.



## Our sourcing map

Our average annual spend with third parties is £20m and we currently source a variety of goods and services from 58 countries worldwide (an increase from 49 as published in our 21/22 statement).

[insert map]

## List of countries we source goods and services from

- United Kingdom
- Argentina
- Australia
- Austria
- Bangladesh
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Cote D'voire
  
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Denmark
- Ethiopia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Ghana
- Greece
- India
- Indonesia
- Italy

- Liberia
- Luxembourg
  
- Madagascar
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Monaco
- Morocco
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oregon
- Pakistan
- Papua New Guinea
- Poland
- Qatar
- Republic of Ireland
- Romania
  
- Singapore
- Slovakia
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Spain
- Sweden
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Turkey
- UAE
- Ukraine
- USA
- Vietnam

## **Our progress: What are we doing about modern slavery?**

### **Our suppliers**

Our sourcing map shows our extensive global supplier base. Given the ongoing global supply issues alongside rising costs, it is an evolving picture. To assure the continuity of critical goods and services needed for our front-line our map has expanded substantially. This reflects the work that the Authority is doing to have greater transparency in our supply chains.

We understand modern slavery could appear in our supplier's business, or any supplier in the chain from raw material to disposal.

As a publicly funded organisation, we ensure absolute transparency in all our purchasing decisions and practices. We continue to build on our promise in our previous statements that all of our Tier 1 suppliers will need to sign up to the [Modern Slavery Assessment Tool](#). We have made great progress in this area. Over £21.4m worth of contracts with suppliers across all categories (fleet, information communications technology, facilities management and construction, operational equipment, clothing/personal protective equipment and professional services) are now working with us to publish their performance against key measures on the tool. The level of information shared with us is proportionate to the critical nature of the goods and services that each supplier gives us, and the level of risk of modern slavery associated with the specific markets they work within.

We work with our Tier 1 suppliers to make sure that they are committed to training workers and their local suppliers on modern slavery risks and compliance.

It certainly cannot be underestimated how complex the audit and traceability processes are when dealing with multi-tier supply chains. This must absolutely be done collaboratively with our Tier 1 suppliers, which will take time, not least because of the dynamic nature of global markets. However, the progress that we are making by working closely together with our suppliers with a shared

purpose and values will continue to ensure that we do right by everyone that engages with our organisation.

Our suppliers are taking positive steps to help make sure that their supply chains and every individual that works within the chain is free of any risk of modern slavery. Action such as on-site pre-enrolment systems and anonymised call cycles to check directly with workers regarding their human rights and their personal experiences of the employment processes to ensure that they are ethical, and every individual is aware of their rights. We also have suppliers who are signed up to and follow the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority protocols; and suppliers who are in collaboration with the UK Construction Industry to address slavery and forced labour risks in the industry.

## **Supplier code of conduct**

The authority works in a responsible, ethical and open way and we expect the same from our suppliers. We have set out the standards, values and behaviours we expect from our suppliers in our [Supplier Code of Conduct](#) . We ask suppliers to confirm that they will work with us to protect and respect human rights.

## **Policies and controls**

We are committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty and accountability. As such, policies have been developed or updated to reduce slavery and human trafficking:

- [Modern Slavery Policy](#)
- Speak Up Policy
- Transparency Policy
- Safeguarding Policy:
  - Guidance Document G27 – How to raise a safeguarding concern.
  - Guidance Document G28 – Safeguarding Terms and Definitions.
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Managing Safeguarding Allegations Policy

If a modern slavery risk is identified, our Modern Slavery Policy provides links to comprehensive legal guidance.

We keep our policies under regular review, ensuring that we have the right guidance, processes and controls in place to detect modern slavery related offences.

We work closely with external agencies and law enforcement, as well as attending industry meetings to stay on top of emerging modern slavery trends. The intelligence we get from this helps us strengthen our capabilities to recognise red flags in customers' transactional behaviours.

## **Looking after our people**

Our internal policies encourage a culture of supporting and empowering our people, recognising that we must ensure that modern slavery is considered at every significant decision gateway internally, as well as externally.

In March 2023 we adopted an updated flexible working policy, which means that from day one of joining our organisation, colleagues can request flexible working to enable greater opportunities for work-life balance. The policy reflects our proactive approach to introducing measures that give our people freedom of choice, long before any legislation changes. It is quite simply the right thing to do.

We understand that social isolation has become a growing issue since the Pandemic, which is a known factor for increasing risk of exploitation. We have set clear guides for managers in terms of adding in regular face to face touchpoints with colleagues. We also have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in place for 24/7 support.

We make sure that any recruitment services that we engage apply the same high standards that we do. Verifying ID, the right to work in the UK along with Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks helps us learn who we are employing to identify whether someone is connected to modern slavery-related activities, as perpetrator or victim.

## **Process and risk**

We have developed a safeguarding concern referral form. We signpost our people to the process of raising a concern through guidance published on our intranet, safeguarding training is mandatory. We have widely distributed posters, some of which have been developed with our external EAP provider, that signpost colleagues on whistleblowing. or show a process flow diagram for raising a concern. We continually look at the referral process to make sure that first accounts are recorded by the person identifying the concern. The information asked for on our referral form is consistent with other partners. We make sure the concerns and feelings and wishes of the person are documented at the earliest opportunity.

Working with our legal advisers, we have developed improved obligations on our suppliers by introducing modern slavery compliance clauses which we are including in procurement projects. As a result, our suppliers are obligated to take steps to investigate and identify issues relating to the Modern Slavery Act and to tell us at once if they become aware of any issues within their supply chains. We want to make sure that the rights of everyone working on our contracts are protected and have therefore also included provision for income security and working hours. Our future contracts will also include details of the Modern Slavery Helpline and link to the online reporting facility.

## **Training and awareness**

### **All of our teams:**

A two-year training plan was launched in March 2022. Modern slavery and human trafficking e-learning is mandatory for all new and existing colleagues as part of our safeguarding training. Specific roles will decide whether members of our teams receive level 2, 3 or 4 training, i.e, call handler level 2, safeguarding officer level 4. This is evidenced in our Safeguarding Policy.

The training plan is reviewed on an annual basis.

## **Our frontline:**

Safeguarding Level 3 and 4 training has been completed by 70 colleagues and 131 have completed the enhanced Level 2 since the National Fire Chief Council's 'train the trainer' session in October 2021. These numbers will continue to grow as more colleagues are due to undertake the training until September 2023.

## **Commercial and Procurement:**

The Commercial and Procurement team has made good progress with its commitment to Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) Ethical Procurement and Supply E-Learning. All team members that have responsibility for sourcing or supplier relationship management have now completed the training and are certified. This means that KMFRA are now able to progress with signing the CIPS Corporate Code of Ethics and Ethics statement, which means that we shall be listed on the CIPS Corporate Ethical Register.

Our registration will be a symbol of our efforts to procuring ethically and the steps that we are taking to eradicate malpractice from our supply chains. Our commitment to the statement aligns with our approach to continuous learning, making sure that our people are equipped with the knowledge and understanding to make this happen. This will be renewed annually.

The team is also committed to their continued professional development and regularly participate in webinars to expand their learning and exposure to actions taken and lessons learned from real-life cases found within supply chains.

## **Collaboration and stakeholder engagement**

Compliance and positive steps towards change relies on teamwork. Our partnerships are integral for the Authority in addressing modern slavery risks, helping us to stay on top of emerging modern slavery trends and strengthen our detection capabilities.

We have had many intervention successes resulting from multi-agency collaboration, like the number of safeguarding cases we have identified.

Key organisations and initiatives we continue to partner with are:

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Issues/Area of work</b>	<b>Working together</b>
Stop the Traffik	Registered Charity building a global picture of human trafficking hotspots and trends through information sharing and collaboration.	To build resilience into communities, and to encourage appropriate response and reporting.	Providing training and support to KMFRA Safeguarding Manager
The Salvation Army	24/7 support	Modern Slavery Helpline available 24/7	Support provided via the helpline if concerns are identified, and further advice needed.
Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority	Non-Departmental Public Body set up to protect vulnerable and exploited workers.	Investigate reports of worker exploitation and illegal activity such as human trafficking, forced labour and illegal labour provision, as well as offences under the National Minimum Wage	Point of reference for knowledge, skills, and experience in terms of all aspects of human rights abuse.  Presented at senior managers forum to build on knowledge and



		and Employment Agencies Acts.	awareness across our organisation.
Police	Emergency services partner	First responders for modern slavery issues	Sharing of information if detected to help trace individuals.  Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Co-ordinator provided training to our Designated Safeguarding Officers and Head of Commercial and Procurement
UK Fire and Rescue Services	Fire and Rescue Sector	Sharing of information and learning	Sharing of model template for Modern Slavery Policy for adoption sector wide.

## Looking ahead

We are proud to report that we are responding to modern slavery in a way that reflects our Customer Promise, with safety being our primary focus.

Modern slavery is a complex, multi-layered issue. We are committed to our responsibility to regularly review our policies, due diligence, and risk assessment processes to strengthen our approach to modern slavery. This allows us to

identify, assess, and address risk, to tackle modern slavery from its root causes and protect the human rights of the people in our business and supply chains.

We will continue to widen the scope of our due diligence to engage and share our ambitions with our suppliers and train everyone within our organisation to spot the signs of modern slavery.

It is crucial that we measure how effective our efforts are in delivering long-term sustainable change and tackling modern slavery from its root causes and we will be proud to carry the CIPS ethical mark once awarded as a symbol of our commitment.

Over the reporting period that this statement covers, we have increased our knowledge of our supply chains by growing the number of suppliers that are working with us to mitigate modern slavery risks in our supply base.

We recognise that there is still progress to be made across our supply chains. We are committed to reviewing and improving our practices and collaborating with others to ensure that we continually improve within an ever-changing world.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners, including our customers and suppliers, without whom our work to protect the rights of individuals in our supply chains and address the risk of modern slavery wouldn't be possible.

Signed

**Nick Chard**

Chair, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

**Ann Millington**

Chief Executive, Kent Fire and Rescue Service

By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services  
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 29 June 2023  
Subject: EXTERNAL AUDITORS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22  
Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

Each year Members will be aware that the External Auditors, Grant Thornton, present their Annual Report to Members of the Authority for their review and consideration. Last year there was a change in approach to the presentation of the report, which as a consequence now reflects their assessment of this Authority's Value for Money arrangements that are in place. This covers the key criteria of financial sustainability governance and how we have improved economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Alongside this assessment is their Opinion of the Financial Statements for the year ending 2021/22. Whilst this work is still not concluded as yet, it does provide commentary on the significant aspects of the Statements which they have reviewed, and I am pleased to say that it does highlight that there were no significant weaknesses that were identified during the Audit, as set out under the National Audit Office Code of Practice.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to:

1. Agree to consider the matter raised in the External Auditors Annual Audit Report (paragraph 3 to 9 and **Appendix 1** refer).
2. Note the remaining contents of this report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Director, Finance and Corporate Services - Alison Hartley  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext. 8262  
EMAIL: [alison.hartley@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:alison.hartley@kent.fire-uk.org)  
BACKGROUND PAPERS:

## Background

1. The “Code of Audit Practice” for Local Authorities, Police forces, Fire Services and NHS Trusts sets out how External Auditors should conduct audits in the Public Sector in order to fulfil their statutory responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. It ensures the audits offer a robust assurance, transparency and accountability for local taxpayers.
2. One of the biggest areas within the ‘Code of Audit Practice’ is that in relation to Value for Money. As part of the annual audit of the financial statements Auditors are required to give a separate opinion on Value for Money which focusses on ascertaining if the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
3. **Auditors Annual Report** - The structure of the annual commentary on arrangements the Authority has undertaken to secure value for money, enables Auditors to explain the work they have undertaken during the year and highlight any significant weaknesses they have identified and bring them to the Authority’s attention, along with their recommendations for any areas where they consider may need improvement. The Annual Report, attached at **Appendix 1**, enables Auditors to reflect local context and draw attention to emerging and developing issues which may not represent significant weaknesses but may require the attention of the Authority. When reporting these arrangements Auditors will comment under three specified reporting criteria. These are set out below, alongside the conclusion of their review under each aspect: -
4. **Financial Sustainability** – how the Authority plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;

*Conclusion - The Authority has continued to have clear and robust processes related to its financial planning. There is still uncertainty around the medium-term funding and cost position of the Authority, but they have a well-built, long-term and forward-looking plan in place.*

5. **Governance** – how the Authority ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks;

*Conclusion - The Authority continues to have good processes in place for the monitoring of risks, budget setting, budget monitoring and effective decision making. No new recommendations have been raised in this area.*

6. **Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness** – how the Authority uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

*Conclusion - Overall, we are satisfied the Authority has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure it can deliver economy, efficiency and effectiveness with good processes in place for performance monitoring, procurement and contract management, and partnership working. The Authority have worked well in acting proactively rather than reactively to situations.*

7. The majority of the work in relation to the Value for Money assessment was undertaken earlier this year. Having reviewed the Authority's arrangements, the Executive Summary on page 3 of **Appendix 1** highlights that there was no significant weakness identified in any of the three reporting criteria, although it does make comment on one aspect in relation to the Corporate Risk Register, with detail set out on page 17 of **Appendix 1**.
8. **Financial Statements** – Whilst the audit of the 2021/22 accounts is substantially complete, there is a national issue in relation to the triennial valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme, which is delaying the sign off, of many public sector accounts for this financial year. Unfortunately, we are one of those authorities affected by this issue. However, it is pleasing to report that other than an issue in relation to land and building measurements, which has now been resolved, they have thanked us for providing a good set of working papers and have no further issues to highlight.
9. The latest position in relation to the pensions valuation issue, has resulted in a bulletin release, on the 19 May, from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), advising auditors and local authorities on the way forward. Subsequent to that release we have been advised by Grant Thornton that they are awaiting the outcome of a review, that has been commissioned by the National Audit Office, which is due end of the month, as to whether the updated assumptions of each actuary are reasonable. Once the report for this review is available, it will then determine whether any amendments are required to the accounts. We will update Members at the next meeting of this Committee as to the outcome of this review.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

10. There are no financial implications arising from this report that cannot be managed within the overall budget.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

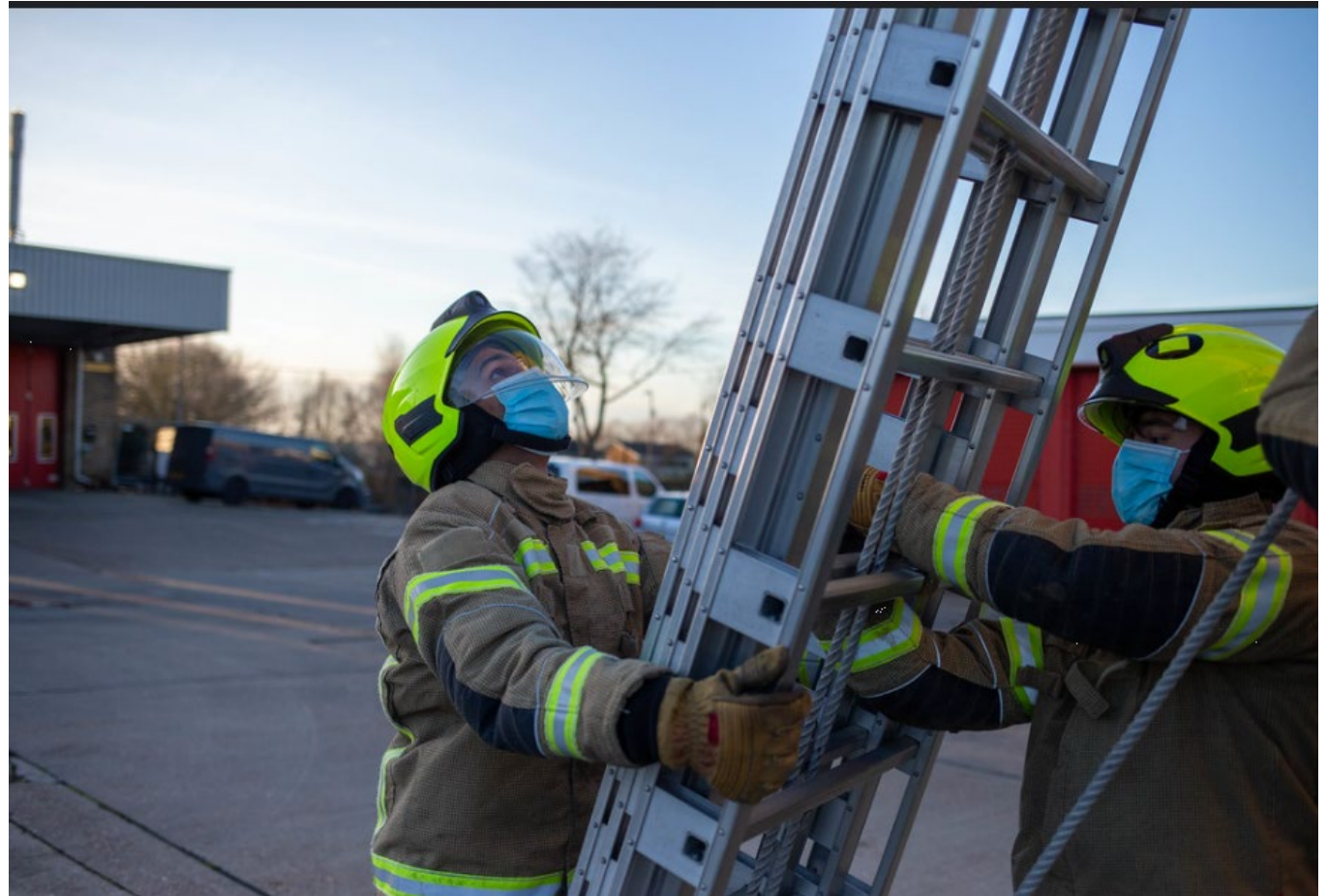
11. Members are requested to:

11.1 Agreed to consider the External Auditors Annual Report (paragraph 3 to 9 and **Appendix 1** refer).

11.2 Note the remaining contents of this report.

# Auditor's Annual Report on Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

2021/22



# Contents



We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Service has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) requires us to report to you our commentary relating to proper arrangements.

We report if significant matters have come to our attention. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Service's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.



Section	Page
Executive summary	3
Opinion on the financial statements and use of auditor's powers	5
Commentary on the Service's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources	6
Financial sustainability	7
Governance	9
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	12
Pension Fund	15
Fire Authority Comparative Analysis	16
Follow-up of previous recommendations	17
Opinion on the financial statements	18
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A – Responsibilities of the Service	20
Appendix B – An explanatory note on recommendations	21
Appendix C – Sources of evidence	22

The contents of this report relate only to those matters which came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed for the purpose of completing our work under the NAO Code and related guidance. Our audit is not designed to test all arrangements in respect of value for money. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify significant weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose all irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in arrangements that a more extensive special examination might identify. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

Grant Thornton UK LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales: No.OC307742. Registered office: 30 Finsbury Square, London, EC2A 1AG. A list of members is available from our registered office. Grant Thornton UK LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Grant Thornton UK LLP is a member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL). GTIL and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions.









# Executive summary






## Value for money arrangements and key recommendations

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to consider whether the Service has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Auditors are required to report their commentary on the Service's arrangements under specified criteria and 2021/22 is the second year that we have reported our findings in this way. As part of our work, we considered whether there were any risks of significant weakness in the Service's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Our conclusions are summarised in the table below.

Criteria	Risk assessment	2020/21 Auditor Judgment	2021/22 Auditor Judgment	Direction of travel
Financial sustainability	No risks of significant weakness identified	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified	↔
Governance	No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendation made	 Improvement recommendation raised around Corporate Risk Register (number of risks, lack of actions and timeframe)	 The Authority have partially addressed the improvement recommendation and an update has been provided following on from prior year	↔
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	No risks of significant weakness identified	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified	↔

	No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified and no/few improvement recommendation made.
	No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but a number improvement recommendations made.
	Significant weaknesses in arrangements identified and key recommendations made.

# Executive summary



## Financial sustainability

The Authority have an established budget setting and monitoring processes. Financial planning is based on realistic assumptions with a long-term and forward-facing view. Furthermore, they have made good progress in achieving savings overall. They have been able to balance their position for 2022/23 and per the MTFP, and there is low risk to financial sustainability going forward.



## Governance

The Authority have maintained effective governance arrangements during 2021/22 with performance and risk management processes being reported to the Audit and Governance Committee three times a year, and reviewed by the senior leadership team regularly. Overall we have concluded that the Authority continue to have strong procedures around risk monitoring, budget setting, and governance arrangements, but should look to add more regular updates to action plans, and timeframes around risks to their Corporate Risk Register.



## Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Overall, the Authority have effective arrangements in place in relation to delivering economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its services to local residents. Robust policies and regularly updated strategies are in place in relation to performance monitoring, procurement and partnership working.



Our audit of your financial statements is ongoing. Our findings are set out in further detail on page 18.



# Opinion on the financial statements and use of auditor's powers

We bring the following matters to your attention:

## Opinion on the financial statements

Auditors are required to express an opinion on the financial statements that states whether they : (i) present a true and fair view of the Service's financial position, and (ii) have been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22

Our audit of your financial statements is ongoing. Our findings are set out in further detail on page 18.

## Statutory recommendations

Under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors can make written recommendations to the audited body which need to be considered by the body and responded to publicly

No issues identified

## Public Interest Report

Under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors have the power to make a report if they consider a matter is sufficiently important to be brought to the attention of the audited body or the public as a matter of urgency, including matters which may already be known to the public, but where it is in the public interest for the auditor to publish their independent view.

No issues identified

## Application to the Court

Under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, if auditors think that an item of account is contrary to law, they may apply to the court for a declaration to that effect.

No issues identified

## Advisory notice

Under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors may issue an advisory notice if the auditor thinks that the authority or an officer of the authority:

- is about to make or has made a decision which involves or would involve the authority incurring unlawful expenditure,
- is about to take or has begun to take a course of action which, if followed to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency, or
- is about to enter an item of account, the entry of which is unlawful.

No issues identified

## Judicial review

Under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors may make an application for judicial review of a decision of an authority, or of a failure by an authority to act, which it is reasonable to believe would have an effect on the accounts of that body.

No issues identified

# Securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the Service's use of resources

All Fire and Rescue Services are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness from their resources. This includes taking properly informed decisions and managing key operational and financial risks so that they can deliver their objectives and safeguard public money. The Service's responsibilities are set out in Appendix A.

Fire and Rescue Services report on their arrangements, and the effectiveness of these arrangements as part of their annual governance statement.

Under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, we are required to be satisfied whether the Service has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note (AGN) 03, requires us to assess arrangements under three areas:



## Financial Sustainability

Arrangements for ensuring the Service can continue to deliver services. This includes planning resources to ensure adequate finances and maintain sustainable levels of spending over the medium term (3-5 years).



## Governance

Arrangements for ensuring that the Service makes appropriate decisions in the right way. This includes arrangements for budget setting and management, risk management, and ensuring the Service makes decisions based on appropriate information.



## Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Arrangements for improving the way the Service delivers its services. This includes arrangements for understanding costs and delivering efficiencies and improving outcomes for service users.



Our commentary on the Service's arrangements in each of these three areas, is set out on the following pages. Further detail on the range of different recommendations that can be raised by the Service's auditors is included in Appendix B.

# Financial sustainability



## We considered how the Service:

- identifies all the significant financial pressures that are relevant to its short and medium-term plans and builds them into its plans
- plans to bridge its funding gaps and identify achievable savings
- plans its finances to support the sustainable delivery of services in accordance with strategic and statutory priorities
- ensures its financial plan is consistent with other plans such as workforce, capital, investment and other operational planning which may include working with other local public bodies as part of a wider system
- identifies and manages risk to financial resilience, such as unplanned changes in demand and assumptions underlying its plans.

## Financial Outturn 2021/22

A review of the financial outturn for 2021/22 indicates sound planning throughout the year with an underspend of £1.707 million achieved through ongoing budget monitoring across services. The budget clearly takes into consideration local and national changes which feed into the four-year financial plan. A breakdown of the revenue budget variances totalling the £1.707 million is provided within the Statement of Accounts 2021/22. The largest items within this breakdown are employee costs, utility costs and a one-off £1m backdated Business Rates rebate relating to review of rateable value of fire stations.

Within the Budget book and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and Authority Meeting Papers, the summary revenue budget estimates show a balanced position for every year from 2021/22 through to 2024/25. The net revenue budget is met by the funding made up of primarily of tax collections and support grants. A detailed breakdown has been provided allocating the savings of £0.989 million within the base budget carried forward.

Financial planning is based on realistic assumptions - analysis on council tax and business rate growth is carried out regularly and published on their website and also in their Budget Book. The Authority uses an incremental approach to develop the budget and there is due consideration is taken of all potential cost pressures and possible savings alongside anticipated funding changes over the medium term.

In 2021/22, the amount of money coming into KMFRA was 71% from Council Tax, 23% from business rates, 11% from Government (Revenue Support Grant and Covid-19 support package) and 5% to be repaid to billing authorities for Collection Fund deficits.

There is no evidence of cashflow difficulties or an inability for the Authority to pay creditors.

Budgets are reviewed on an ongoing basis, with meetings being held with each budget manager on at least a quarterly basis. The Senior Management team, which meets on a monthly basis, reviews progress on the key projects and any new project proposals, which are in line with the initiatives detailed in the Customer Safety Plan 2021-2031 and the six supporting strategies. All corporate projects focus on benefit realisation and corporate risk, looking at operational as well as financial savings. Risk analysis and management is carried out for each of their key initiatives to ensure savings can be identified at each stage of the process, or plans are in place to ensure the initiative does not go above budget.

A finance report is presented to every authority meeting which includes reference to any budget changes or those that require formal Member approval. This evidences that budgets are continually under review, and the Authority proactively monitor services to keep track of any slippage and allocate time and resources accordingly.

## 2022/23 Budget

In February 2022, the Authority approved a balanced budget for the financial year 2022/23. There was strong internal and external engagement throughout the budget setting process

We have reviewed the assumptions, and financial risks and pressures disclosed around the 2022/23 budget and MTFP and are satisfied that they are reasonable, and all the key considerations have been made.



# Financial sustainability

## Medium Term Financial Position

The Authority update their MTFP and budget book annually for a rolling four year period. It was most recently updated in February 2023 to cover the period 2023/24 - 2026/27. The Authority has a clear understanding of the medium-term challenges it faces and has ensured the MTFP is aligned to deliver the outcomes of its key strategies. The MTFP includes a detailed functional and subjective budget analysis breaking down the calculations that make up the annual budget. The MTFP is developed and updated between October and February each year, with the final MTFP and the budget being agreed by the Authority in February each year.

Although the Spending Review set departmental budgets up to 2024/25, the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, announced on 19 December 2022, only provided funding figures for the Authority for the financial year 2023/24. This and the delay of review by Government of local authority funding means there is currently some uncertainty regarding government funding levels beyond 2023/24.

The current MTFP shows a balanced position for the next two years with £0.907 million savings yet to be identified across 2025/26 and 2026/27. Key risks to delivering this balanced position are clearly outlined in the MTFP report with a clear risk analysis.

A key risk currently affecting the Authority is when setting the budget details of pay awards are not agreed and during 2021/22 and 2022/23 final agreed pay awards were higher than assumed within budgets. This has been managed in short term using reserves where necessary and incorporated into the MTFP when known.

## Reserves

The Authority has a Reserves Strategy which is refreshed on an annual basis and a summary is presented on the MTFP, to further support decision making. As at March 2022, the Authority's reserves were £41,321m (excluding capital receipts), with their general reserves totalling just under £4m. This £4m balance is just above 5% of the Authority's annual net expenditure – a benchmark many in the sector consider should be held. This is a prudent approach which should help manage the financial uncertainty faced by the Authority in the medium term.

KMFRA's earmarked reserves include Government Grants, Rolling Budget, Service Transformation Productivity, Insurance and Resource, and Infrastructure. The Infrastructure Reserve is by far the largest with just under £28m.

This reserve is funding set aside to fund the Capital programme, and is drawn down as and when required by capital projects. It significantly reduces the cost impact of borrowing to fund the capital programme.

The Capital Receipts reserve is available to fund capital expenditure, with the forecast capital receipts opening balance for the 2022/23 financial year expected to be £9.4m with the potential for further receipts in the next few years. These balances will be utilised in future years to help support the funding of the capital programme. They will help smooth out the peaks and troughs of the service demands in order to provide a balanced capital programme, further reducing the need to borrow.

## Capital Plans

Members regularly review and update the Capital Strategy given that it represents the long-term capital investment for the Authority. Figures are updated to reflect the latest capital forecasts.

The principles the Capital Programme follows are laid out in the Capital Budget Strategy. These include ensuring capital resources are aligned with corporate priorities as set out in the Customer Safety Plan and supporting strategies, maintaining an affordable 10 year rolling capital programme and undertaking Prudential Borrowing only where there are sufficient monies to meet the full implications of capital expenditure (both borrowing and revenue running costs). The capital programme is subject to robust project controls including approval of all projects by SLT. Transparency, accountability and sustainability of the funding are key elements of the Authority's governance procedures.

The Authority's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of the Capital Plan is reflected in the Prudential Indicators, which are designed to assist Members' overview and confirm capital expenditure plans. The Annual Treasury Management and Investment report are subsequently reported to the Authority as part of the full suite of budget papers at the February Authority meeting.

## Conclusion

The Authority has continued to have clear and robust processes related to its financial planning. There is still uncertainty around the medium-term funding and cost position of the Authority, but they have a well-built, long-term and forward-looking plan in place.

# Governance



## We considered how the Service:

- monitors and assesses risk and gains assurance over the effective operation of internal controls, including arrangements to prevent and detect fraud
- approaches and carries out its annual budget setting process
- ensures effective processes and systems are in place to ensure budgetary control; communicate relevant, accurate and timely management information (including non-financial information); supports its statutory financial reporting; and ensures corrective action is taken where needed, including in relation to significant partnerships
- ensures it makes properly informed decisions, supported by appropriate evidence and allowing for challenge and transparency. This includes arrangements for effective challenge from those charged with governance/audit committee
- monitors and ensures appropriate standards, such as meeting legislative/regulatory requirements and standards in terms of staff and board member behaviour (such as gifts and hospitality or declaration/conflicts of interests) and where it procures and commissions services.

## Risk monitoring and effectiveness of internal controls

The Authority has robust processes around risk monitoring in place with a Corporate Risk Management Policy which sets out corporate expectations in terms of the management of risk, risk escalation processes, corporate roles and responsibilities and reporting. The principles of risk management are incorporated into all key policy development and major project management processes to ensure that the threats to delivery are identified and managed.

There is a Corporate Risk Register in place which is updated regularly. On the latest Register per the time of this review, there are 15 risks (21 risks stated in July 2021) which are RAG-rated in terms of severity and key controls and control effectiveness are stated for each. Each risk is linked to several individuals who take ownership; however, they could be mapped through directly to corporate objectives.

The Audit and Governance Committee was set up in September 2021 and allow for the better monitoring and reporting of risks. In order to meet the Risk Management policy, the Authority must agree and document its appetite for risk, identify key strategic, operational and project risks it faces and assess these against its documented risk appetite, develop appropriate controls to ensure risks are kept within acceptable tolerances, and finally monitor, review and update risk information to be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee at least annually on the status of current risks.

Internal audit is provided by Kent County Council which includes counter fraud support. There were seven audit reviews completed during the year, which have resulted in one high, four substantial and two adequate opinions. Those reviews have resulted in six audits obtaining very good prospects for improvement and one obtaining good prospects for improvement, based on their resulting action plans.

Two further advisory audits (Fire Standards and Cyber Security) were also completed within the year and Internal Audit have confirmed good assurance for the processes and controls in place.

Internal Audit concluded that for 2021/22 financial year, 'Substantial' assurance could be assigned in relation to the Authority's corporate governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. There are no significant matters which need to be included within the Annual Governance Statement. The annual audit opinion provides Members with assurance that the Authority has robust internal control processes in place and the cost of the service has remained within the funding allocated.

There is an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy in place which is updated annually as well as a Fraud Risk Assessment and Anti Bribery Corporate Policy. The Authority have completed an FFCL checklist (Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally), have key policies for code of conduct and whistleblowing in place, and implement regular risk training.

# Governance

## Annual budget setting process

The Authority has an established budget setting process and any changes or adjustments made are based on the most up-to-date trends to ensure the accuracy of this process. It is linked closely with the corporate objectives of the Authority and the MTFP. Financial plans are agreed with budget managers and are then escalated to be approved by the Corporate Management Board.

There is no evidence of lack of ownership or involvement of key stakeholders. The Authority involve all relevant parties in budget-setting process, including senior management and budget managers, local resident/customer feedback and collaborate openly with other Fire Authorities where possible. All areas are managed by individuals with specific responsibilities to ensure high quality and performance.

Investment and borrowing activity is built into the MTFP but doesn't represent a key risk to the Authority's financial position. The Authority can use prudential borrowing to fund capital expenditure provided that such borrowing is affordable, prudent and sustainable over the medium term. A range of calculations (prudential indicators) are completed as part of the annual budget setting process to evidence this. Provided there is no additional borrowing, the Authority expect to clear all outstanding borrowing by 2025.

## Effective processes and systems to ensure budgetary control

Budget reporting is strong and at a sufficient level of detail to enable the Authority to make effective decisions. There are monthly spend analysis budget reports that budget managers can access through the finance system and review at any time. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services has regular contact with the budget managers to ensure the smooth-running of the process. Regular financial updates are given to the Board through the Authority Meetings and reports which show details of budget position and explanations for all key variances. Working papers to support the information included in the 2021/22 accounts include various analytical reviews, schedules and explanations of any significant variances between the previous and current year.

Treasury management updates are included within the finance report in the Authority Meetings. The annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 was approved by the Authority in February 2021, and is implemented by the Finance team. The authorised limit for external borrowings and long term liabilities was set at £22m.

There is a low turnover on the Corporate Management Board and Committees – the Chief Executive has been in place for almost 12 years and was given an OBE at the start of 2023 for her long-standing service to the fire and rescue sector.

## Properly informed decisions, supported by appropriate evidence, and allowing for effective challenge

Key decisions are made at Authority Meetings that take place three times a year and meeting minutes show that discussions are full and challenge assumptions made to ensure they are reasonable and adequate. The MTFP and business plan is consulted upon every year with stakeholders and the public. The Authority have created an updated MTFP for 2022/23 - 2025/26 following a thorough review of the annual budget setting process and the MTFP in the prior year.

All audit reports are shared through the Audit and Governance Committee set up in September 2021, and risks and recommendations are discussed by the relevant teams regularly. The internal audit team report to the Audit and Governance Committee at least twice yearly and covers progress in the delivery of the annual plan.

Senior management are pivotal in the budget setting and decision-making process. There is no evidence of any issues relating to transparency, ownership or engagement noted. No unlawful decision-making has been identified.

## Monitors and ensures appropriate standards

Arrangements are in place within the Authority to monitor compliance with legislation and regulatory standards. There is a Code of Ethical Conduct and other policies in place along with training, shared with employees to ensure positive behaviour and a strong working culture and environment.

There is a clear process and line of reporting for member breaches of which there have not been any in the 2021/22 financial year and onwards to date.

There has not been evidence of any serious data security breaches noted. Cybersecurity risk has been noted as a very severe risk on the Corporate Risk Register and a cybersecurity risk assessment was carried out in the year.



---

# Governance

---

There is a Gifts and Hospitality Policy in place and it is part of the Authority's policy not to accept gifts or hospitality from third parties. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is the senior officer accountable for this policy.

We are not aware of any declarations of interest made in the year, or any instances of interests not being declared which could damage the Authority's reputation.

## Conclusion

The Authority continue to have good processes in place for the monitoring of risks, budget setting, budget monitoring and effective decision making. No new recommendations have been raised in this area.

# Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness



## We considered how the Service:

- uses financial and performance information to assess performance to identify areas for improvement
- evaluates the services it provides to assess performance and identify areas for improvement
- ensures it delivers its role within significant partnerships and engages with stakeholders it has identified, in order to assess whether it is meeting its objectives
- where it commissions or procures services assesses whether it is realising the expected benefits.

## Uses financial and performance information to assess performance

Annual performance is reported through the Authority Meetings and annual performance report published for wider audience publicly on their website. Data and infographics are released regularly with number of incidents updated at least every 24 hours.

The Authority has historically measured a wide range of performance indicators to monitor performance in the form of KPIs. In the past few years they have made changes in how they present the information and now use a balanced scorecard approach. There a data enablement plan that provides a consolidated plan to improve data, skills and tools in order to achieve strategic goals.

Most projects have a data analysis element, either for determining the problem solved, evidencing the decision they are planning to take, and/or setting the baseline for benefits realisation and monitoring outcomes.

Further to this, from 2022/23 they are moving to enhance and improve the accuracy of this approach and creating 'data dials' which will demonstrate the impact particular indicators are having on a corporate concern.

For example, looking for the underlying factors that could affect how much is spent on overtime such as levels of activity, amount of training, establishment levels and sickness levels. These are still in progress but demonstrate of the Authority's proactive way of working and where they are heading in terms of monitoring cause and effect in relation to performance.

The Authority has explored collaborating with other Fire Authorities across the country but acknowledges comparisons between fire authorities is difficult when demographics vary so much.

There is a Fire Finance Network where all the Fire Authorities get together around 3-4 times a year to share information, get an understanding of what views are on different issues in the sector, and to make sure they aren't missing anything, i.e. gain an understanding on what different authorities are putting into their financial plans.

The regulator of the fire service is His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue services (HMICFRS). Fire and Rescue was only added to the responsibilities of HMIC in 2017. KMFRA were inspected in 2021/22 and were rated at least "Good" in all areas which is an improvement from the last report released in 2018/19 where two areas: "protecting the public through fire regulation" and get the "right people with the right skills" were rated as "requires improvement". The overall ratings for KFRS in 2021/22 were Good for Effectiveness, Outstanding for Efficiency, and Good for People, which is a big improvement from the last report.

## Evaluates the services it provides to assess performance

There is no evidence of a failure to meet minimum service standards during the year. The Authority actively review performance and challenge strategic priorities and current activities, as evidenced by the updated Budget Book and MTFP for 2022/23-2025/26.

There are Integrated Risk Management Plans which illustrate where they want to take the organisation. These are published as a Customer Safety Plan and a Safety Wellbeing Plan on the website every year.

# Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Key and supporting strategies are reviewed and updated every year to ensure they align with the key corporate objectives and have sufficient benefit realisation attached to them. There is no evidence of the Authority focusing on short-term issues only, and they are very proactive in their approach to efficiency and innovation, as well as responding to recommendations raised for improvement.

## Ensures it delivers its role within significant partnerships and engages with stakeholders

A key strategic partnership for the Authority, and one which they lead on, is the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF). This is a partnership of organisations and agencies who work together to improve the resilience of Kent and Medway in coordinating their response to emergencies that could significantly impact local communities. KMFRA have a number of other partnerships around estate-sharing opportunities, wider support with ambulance services, fire control and procurement.

Authority meetings include regular updates on partnership matters. There are entire governance structures set up around partnership working, including a Delivery Board to monitor performance. Each partner brings their particular skillset or level of authority.

One member of each project sits on the Governance board who acts as a representative for that body. If the issue is around spend, this is raised to the Management Board; if it is a strategic issue then it is raised to the Strategic Board. This is set out within the strategy documents which are reported on regularly.

The Authority work openly with the partnerships. There are Regional Boards on issues like setting up the correct frameworks to find shared ways of working, job procurement, etc. which Kent lead on nationally. These actions are reported through to members through structures that are set up to track issues escalated to the Corporate Incident Board.

An example is around road safety. This is not a specific statutory duty but the Authority work with KCC and Medway Council, along with Highways England and Police, to understand how to deliver road safety more effectively to the public.

A success during 2021/22 for the sector was the integrated multi-agency approach on helping migrants on the Channel crossing and managing the impact on the local community. There are reception centres to receive them, and KMFRA worked alongside government departments to ensure that those sites are safe and how to integrate them into the wider community, including those from Ukraine.

The Authority liaise with key stakeholders regularly. There are forward-focused plans in place around public consultation to involve them in the process of how the service is run. They work to outline all the inputs from the National Risk Register, community safety partnerships, etc. and use that information to analyse what environment they are operating in and how to make better use of resources and create savings.

## Assesses whether it is realising the expected benefits where it commissions or procures services

The Authority has an established Commercial and Procurement Strategy in place covering the period of 2021 to 2025. Key areas of focus are operations, technology, fleet and professional services, facilities management and construction, and personal protective equipment and clothing.

There has been no evidence in 2021/22 onwards of failure to operate a fair procurement strategy for any contracts. There are individual procurement strategies for all types of projects, with categories and category leads in place to monitor these who have built up experience in the relevant markets.

The procurement portfolio has been built on intelligence, capability in markets, and fluctuating costs, as well as understanding how to diversify supply chains.

In general, the team look at existing arrangements to see if they can avoid long drawn out processes and obtain an offer that ensures value for money before going with a supplier to procure items. The approach is affected by factors such as criticality, risk, cost, number of suppliers in the market. There are no standard procedures and there is autonomy and flexibility within the law.

---

# Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

---

The Head of Procurement for KMFRA is the Head of the National Procurement Hub which allows the Authority to see what is being done on a regional and national scale and allow for a number of collaborations. They first look to work collaboratively with other fire services and police. Larger projects or replacement contracts go through corporate governance that require sign off from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This tracks the benefits through each project and through the life of the contracts, from early on.

There are desktop exercises for smaller, more local projects. These exercises include looking at the market and seeing which route would be most beneficial. They look at whether frameworks are outdated on a case by case bases and ensure that at the start of any project/contract, the budgets are signed off.

Category leads then meet with the Head of function and finance routinely to map out what the pipeline spend looks like and works with the customer finance team to ensure affordability and providing the best service whilst staying within budget. There are also plans in place to roll out further training in line with new contract and procurement rules/new Procurement Bill.

The Authority has not experienced any significant financial loss or failure to deliver expected outcomes when managing significant outsourced contracts and services. During 2021/22 there was a supplier failure which required legal costs to resolve and the outcome was that the Authority exited that provision.

The contract was through a national framework managed by the National Procurement Hub, which is part of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) The KMFRA Chief Exec and Head of procurement are also part of the hub so also managed the issue as part of the Hub. Some legal costs relating to the framework were paid for by the NFCC.

The Authority take a pro-active approach to contract management to support suppliers and maintain those relationships where possible.

The vehicle servicing and maintenance service was previously a service provision from Kent County Council. In 2022/223, this will be moved in-house and there is a detailed audit trail around this with no significant risks around continuity.

## Conclusion

Overall, we are satisfied the Authority has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure it can deliver economy, efficiency and effectiveness with good processes in place for performance monitoring, procurement and contract management, and partnership working. The Authority have worked well in acting proactively rather than reactively to situations.

---

# KMFRA Pension Fund

---

## Financial sustainability, Governance and Performance

Firefighter pensions are unfunded pension schemes. The fund gets income in from employees and employers paying contributions whereby expenditure consists of the lump sum and regular payments. At the end of the year, the Authority submit a return to the Home Office who provide KMFRA with a payment to cover the difference as a top up amount. KMFRA use an external company called Local Pensions Partnership who act as administrators of the pension scheme and carry out key calculations.

In terms of medium to long term financial management, any revaluations due on the Pension Fund as part of the funding reviews are forecast and financially planned for in the MTFP to ensure affordability and sustainability. The 7-year forecast produced is shared with the Home Office every year. As part of this, they perform a trial balance download explaining any variances and differences between forecast and outturn.

The Corporate Management Board partake in the preparation of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presents to members of the Authority around September/October the assumptions and best case/worst case scenario as part of the budget preparation. Any forecast financial changes to the Pension fund contributions would be reflected within this analysis and in the budget papers for the forthcoming financial year. These are agreed by Members of the Authority at their February meeting within which the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources is required to provide an opinion on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The Pension Fund is in compliance with the Financial Management Code. In terms of governance and financial management, the budget monitoring for the Authority is regularly reported to the Corporate Management Board and members of the Authority. Any substantial changes in the Pension Fund are identified and reported as part of the monitoring processes.

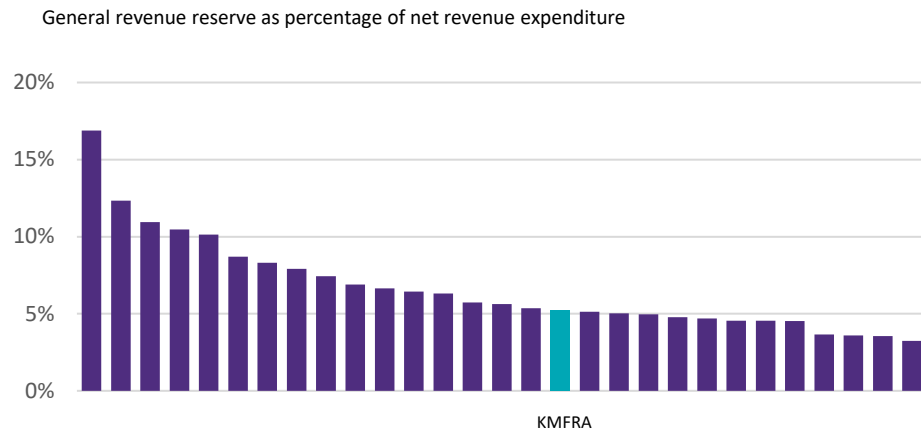
## Conclusion

Overall, we are satisfied there are process and procedures in place to ensure the KMFRA Pension Fund manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services, has processes in place to make informed decisions and manage its risks and has procedures in place to monitor its performance effectively.

# Fire Authority reserves comparative analysis

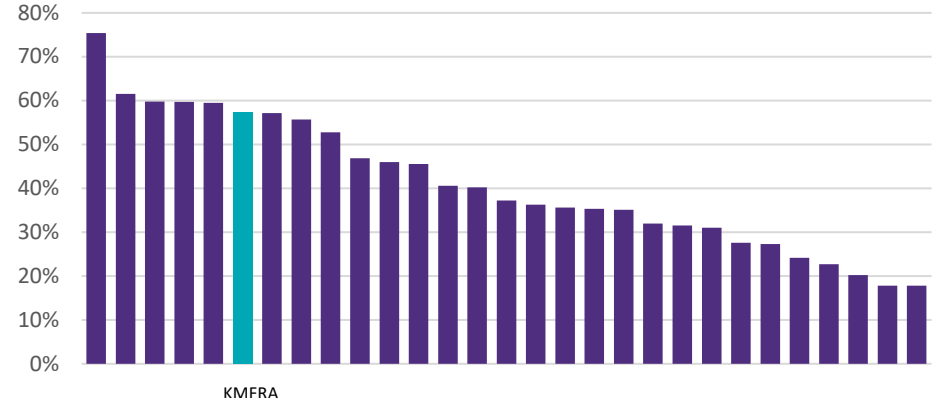
The following charts compare KMFRAs reserves position to the other 28 standalone fire Authorities in England. This information is based on 2021/22 revenue outturn data as published by Department for levelling up, housing and communities.

The graph below shows KMFRAs maintain a general reserve at 5% of net revenue budget. Each individual authority will maintain reserve balances and policies relevant to their local financial strategy and any comparisons should be taken in the wider financial context of each authority.



As well as unallocated reserves authorities hold other useable revenue reserves for specific purposes such as specific risks or projects. Including these balances (as shown to top right of the page) shows KMFRAs has balances totalling 57% of the net revenue expenditure for 2021/22.

Total useable revenue reserves as percentage of net revenue expenditure



During 2021/22 the total useable revenue reserves for KMFRAs reduced by £0.6 million, a 1.5% reduction in opening balances. Across fire authorities there was a range of changes to useable reserves. It should be noted there are many reasons for reductions or increases in reserve balances both planned and unplanned.

Change in useable revenue reserves as percentage of opening balances during 2021-22.

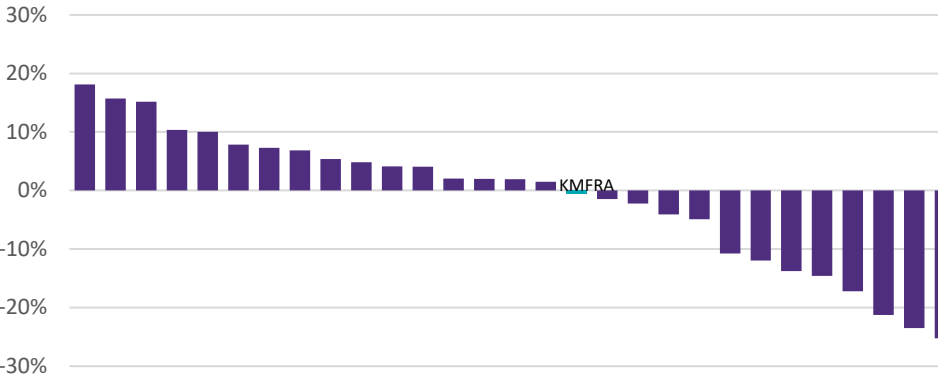


Figure 3

# Follow-up of previous recommendations

	Recommendation	Date raised	Progress to date	Addressed?	Management response
1	<p>Determine whether the number of risks included is appropriate. A dedicated Audit and Governance Committee will likely have sufficient time available to it to meaningfully discuss and challenge a Corporate Risk Register with this many risks.</p> <p>Undertake a review of the detail contained within the Summary Risk Register to ensure that members are able to understand the likelihood and impact of risks and the resultant actions and progress undertaken to mitigate/or reduce them.</p> <p>Consider whether it would be helpful to identify a target score for each risk aligned to the Authority's risk appetite. This would help provide visibility on the success of existing controls in reducing the likelihood (and possibly the impact) of risks crystallising and help provide clarity on which risks are closer to being mitigated and which need more work.</p> <p>(This is a summary of the recommendation raised in 2020/21).</p>	November 2021	<p>There were 21 risks listed in prior year's Corporate Risk Register. In 2021/22, there were only 15 risks which falls between the reasonable and manageable range of risks to monitor of 10 to 15. There is evidence of movement with old risks being removed, new risks added and other risks changing scores as circumstances change or actions are implemented. So the first two elements of the recommendation has been implemented.</p> <p>Risks are RAG-rated and controls and their effectiveness are included and corresponding actions do mostly have clear timescale for when these will be implemented. However there are no target scores so it is unclear how actions are aligned to the Authority's risk appetite. We accept management has chosen not to implement this element of the recommendation and are satisfied that not doing so doesn't adversely impact the governance arrangements in place. As such no further action is suggested.</p>	Partially noting management has considered but chosen not to implement point 3.	N/a

# Opinion on the financial statements



## Audit opinion on the financial statements

Our audit of your financial statements is ongoing. The audit is substantially complete however there is an issue regarding pensions nationally that is delaying signing.

## Audit Findings Report

More detailed findings can be found in our AFR, which was published and reported to the Service's Audit and Governance Committee in November 2022.

## Whole of Government Accounts

To support the audit of the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA), we are required to review and report on the WGA return prepared by the Service. This work includes performing specified procedures under group audit instructions issued by the National Audit Office. Our work in this area is incomplete until our financial statement audit is finalised.

## Preparation of the accounts

The Service provided draft accounts in line with the national deadline and provided a good set of working papers to support it.

## Grant Thornton provides an independent opinion on whether the accounts are:

- True and fair
- Prepared in accordance with relevant accounting standards
- Prepared in accordance with relevant UK legislation





# Appendices

# Appendix A – Responsibilities of the Service

Public bodies spending taxpayers' money are accountable for their stewardship of the resources entrusted to them. They should account properly for their use of resources and manage themselves well so that the public can be confident taxpayers' money is being appropriately used.

Financial statements are the main way in which local public bodies account for how they use their resources. Local public bodies are required to prepare and publish financial statements setting out their financial performance for the year. To do this, bodies need to maintain proper accounting records and ensure they have effective systems of internal control.

All local public bodies are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness from their resources. This includes taking properly informed decisions and managing key operational and financial risks so that they can deliver their objectives and safeguard public money. Local public bodies report on their arrangements, and the effectiveness with which the arrangements are operating, as part of their annual governance statement.

The Chief Financial Officer or equivalent is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Chief Financial Officer or equivalent determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Chief Financial Officer or equivalent is required to prepare the financial statements in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom. In preparing the financial statements, the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) is responsible for assessing the Service's ability to continue as a going concern and use the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention by government that the services provided by the Service will no longer be provided.

The Service is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.



# Appendix B – An explanatory note on recommendations

A range of different recommendations can be raised by the Service’s auditors as follows:

Type of recommendation	Background	Raised within this report	Page reference
Statutory	Written recommendations to the Service under Section 24 (Schedule 7) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.	No	N/A
Key	The NAO Code of Audit Practice requires that where auditors identify significant weaknesses as part of their arrangements to secure value for money they should make recommendations setting out the actions that should be taken by the Service. We have defined these recommendations as ‘key recommendations’.	No	N/A
Improvement	These recommendations, if implemented should improve the arrangements in place at the Service, but are not a result of identifying significant weaknesses in the Service’s arrangements.	Yes	17

# Appendix C – Sources of evidence



## Staff involved

- Ann Millington, Chief Executive
- Alison Hartley, Director of Finance and Corporate Services
- Tina Butler, Head of Procurement
- Nic Harryman, Head of Data and Intelligence
- Jon Quinn, Director of Protection and Prevention
- Matthew Deadman, AD for Response
- Frankie Smith, Internal Audit (KCC)
- James Flannery, Counter Fraud Manager (KCC)
- Richard Stanford-Beale, Customer Experience Strategic Lead
- Nikki Walker, Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions
- Barrie Fullbrook, Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions



## Documents Reviewed

- Budget book and MTFP 2021/22 – 2024/25 and 2022/23 – 2025/26
- Statement of Accounts 2021/22
- KFRS Cashflow 21-22, 22-23
- Authority Meeting Papers
- Financial Management Policy
- Capital Strategy 21/22, 22/23
- Treasury Strategy 21/22, 22/23
- Reserve Strategy 21/22, 22/23
- Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy 2021-25
- Annual Governance Statement 2021-22
- Corporate Risk Register
- Strategic Board/Asset Board Risk Register
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Fraud Risk Assessment
- Cyber Security Risk Assurance Report
- Anti Bribery Corporate Policy/Anti-Money Laundering Policy
- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Customer Safety Plan/Safety and Wellbeing Plan
- Data Enablement Plan
- KFRS CFW Feedback Report from iESE
- Commercial Procurement Strategy 2021-25
- Debrief Report Homes for Ukraine, FireStoppers Plans
- Firefighters Pension Fund 2021-22

By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services  
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 29 June 2023  
Subject: PROVISIONAL FINAL OUTTURN FOR 2022/23  
Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

This report provides Members with information regarding the provisional outturn on revenue and capital spends for the 2022/23 financial year and includes details of the proposed resultant transfers from Earmarked Reserves to fund the final overspend on the revenue budget.

The provisional revenue budget outturn is an overspend of £818k against a budget of £77.429m. The overspend has therefore increased by £394k since the last forecast presented to Members in February 2023, when a forecast overspend of £424k was reported. However, the provisional outturn now includes the additional cost (c. £1.3m) of the higher than budgeted pay award for operational staff, which was not included in the previous forecast position. The nationally agreed pay award for operational staff settled in March 2023 at 7% for 2022/23, which was 4% higher than the 3% increase that had been included in the budget. Therefore, a significant proportion of the additional cost resulting from this pay award has been negated by a net reduction in costs (c. £300k) and additional income (c. £600k) since the last forecast was reported to Members.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Agree the transfer from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to fund the final revenue budget overspend (provisionally £818k), paragraph 4 refers.
2. Consider and note the contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions – Barrie Fullbrook  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext 8264  
EMAIL: barrie.fullbrook@kent.fire-uk.org  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Provisional Revenue Budget Outturn for 2022/23

1. **Revenue Budget** - The provisional revenue budget overspend is £818k against an approved budget of £77.429m. The overspend has increased by £394k since the last reported position to Members in February 2023, which was a forecast overspend of £424k.
2. The overspend has increased due to the higher than budgeted pay award for operational staff, which is a national agreement that settled in March 2023 at 7% for 2022/23, effective from 1 July 2022. The 2022/23 budget included provision for a 3% pay award for operational staff, so the additional 4% has added additional unbudgeted costs of approximately £1.3m to the provisional final outturn. This increase in the overspend has been largely offset by a net reduction in spend in other areas totalling around £300k and additional income, mainly from interest on deposits, totalling around £600k since the last forecast position was reported to Members in February 2023.
3. **External Audit** - The financial statements are subject to review by external audit; hence it is only a provisional final outturn position that is presented to Members in this report. The external auditor presented the draft Audit Plan for 2022/23 to the Audit and Governance Committee in April 2023 and this reported an intention for the audit work in relation to the 2022/23 financial statements to be undertaken in July 2023. There is, though, the possibility that the audit may be delayed, primarily due to the additional audit work that the external auditor may be required to undertake as a result of the ongoing national issues that are currently delaying the sign-off of the 2021/22 financial statements. Any delay is likely to have a knock-on effect on when the accounts are presented to the Audit and Governance Committee for formal agreement.
4. **Funding the Final Overspend** – Members may recall that, as detailed in the Reserves Strategy 2022/23, one of the purposes of establishing an Insurance and Resource reserve is to provide a resource to fund unexpected costs that may arise in year, such as additional costs due to higher than budgeted pay awards. The opening balance on this reserve was £4.3m and in July 2022 Members agreed to draw down funding from this reserve should the need arise. The additional cost of the higher than budgeted support staff pay award (c. £407k) and operational staff pay award (c. £1.3m) is partly offset by net savings and additional income in other areas, so the final net overspend on the revenue budget (provisionally £818k) will be funded by a draw down from the Insurance and Resource reserve.
5. Attached at **Appendices 1** and **3** are the subjective and functional analyses of the revenue budget and final outturn, together with explanations of the material variances at **Appendices 2** and **4**. Whilst it is clear that **Appendices 1** and **3** are in different presentational formats, it should be noted that all subjective headings (including items

such as Transfers to/from Reserves) must be apportioned under one of the functional headings. This may therefore result in a heading in **Appendix 1**, such as Direct Pension costs, having a different figure to a similar heading in **Appendix 3**.

6. **Rolling Budget Reserve** - As part of the closure of accounts process, any funding to support expenditure that has been committed, but for which the relevant goods or services have not been received on or before 31 March, is identified and transferred into the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund the commitment in the following year. As in previous years, the Authority is holding higher levels of stocks of some operational equipment and smoke alarms at the end of the financial year, so it has been necessary to put through a stock adjustment at year-end, meaning a corresponding amount has been rolled in the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund the expenditure which will be recognised in the accounts in the following year. At the end of the year, £464k was transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund commitments made in 2022/23, but where the associated costs would not be incurred or recognised (stock adjustments) until after 31 March 2023. During the year, £712k was transferred from the reserve to fund expenditure committed in 2021/22 but not incurred until 2022/23, making the net movement a decrease on the Rolling Budget Reserve of £248k for 2022/23.
7. The largest items included within the Rolling Budget Reserve closing balance of £619k are; £151k for committed premises works, £149k for stocks of equipment held at year-end, £69k for accounting work (property valuations and external audit work) that was not undertaken before the end of the financial year and, a number of other individually minor items across non-pay budgets, totalling £250k.

### **Capital Budget Outturn for 2022/23 and the Infrastructure Plan**

8. The final capital outturn is £4.235m against the revised capital budget of £5.359m. Details of the Infrastructure Plan (including the Capital Budget) and the most significant variances are attached at **Appendices 5 and 6**.

### **General and Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2023**

9. Details of the final year-end balances on reserves and capital receipts are shown at **Appendix 7**.
10. **General Reserves** - The policy for 2022/23, as agreed by Members, was to maintain the General Reserve balance at approximately 5% of the base revenue budget. In line with this requirement, the General Reserve position as at 31 March 2023 has increased by £210k to £3.970m.
11. **Earmarked Reserves** - Earmarked Reserves at the start of the financial year were £37.561m and, after year-end net transfers from reserves, including the £818k draw down to fund the 2022/23 overspend detailed above, the provisional balance at the end of the financial year is £31.833m.

12. **Capital Receipts** – The opening balance of the Capital Receipts reserve was £9.470m at the start of the financial year. During the year there were new capital receipts from the sale of four vacant day crewed houses and a surplus piece of land, totalling £1.894m (net of administrative costs of disposal). Capital receipts totalling £1.508m were utilised to fund capital expenditure in 2022/23 so the closing balance at the end of the financial year was £9.856m.

### **Other Finance related Issues**

13. **Government Grants** - In 2022/23 the Authority recognised £9.476m of revenue grants that were provided to the Authority outside of the core Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). As in previous years the grants recognised in 2022/23 included Government funding towards; employer costs in relation to increased Firefighter Pension Scheme contributions (£3.536m); business rate reliefs given by the Government (£2.927m); New Dimensions and New Threats related work (£1.012m); Firelink (radio communications) (£474k); additional work in Prevention and Protection (£406k); training costs for apprentices (£44k); increased costs due to additional audit requirements (£14k); costs incurred to ensure compliance with the Transparency Code (£8k); the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) (£5k) and; Covid-19 support (£1k).
14. In addition, the Government provided; a new Services grant in 2022/23 (£1.027m); a grant towards costs incurred in 2022/23 due to requirements of the Building Safety Regulator (£21k) and; a grant of £1k was recognised in 2022/23 to fund costs incurred on a Road Safety Project.

### **Firefighters' Pension Fund 2022/23**

15. Attached at **Appendix 8** is the final outturn for the Firefighters' Pension Fund for 2022/23.
16. The Authority continued to process firefighter retirements under "Immediate Detriment" in 2022/23 so these pension benefits have been calculated using legacy scheme membership for the remedy period. This has resulted in higher pension benefits being paid out of the Pension Fund compared to the estimate that was produced in September 2021. In addition, processing retirements under "Immediate Detriment" has meant that there have been more retirements in 2022/23 compared to the assumptions that were used when producing the September 2021 Pension Fund forecast.
17. The 2022/23 unaudited return was submitted to the Home Office in May and payment of the balance of the deficit in the fund, totalling £3.864m, is expected in July, along with 80% of the estimated top-up grant requirement for 2023/24. As the Authority's 2021/22 Financial Statements have not yet been agreed by external audit the timing of the grant receipt is still to be confirmed by the Home Office.



## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

18. The final revenue budget overspend (provisionally £818k) will be funded by a draw down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve, reducing the balance in the reserve to £3.071m at 31 March 2023.
19. Resources have been rolled forward to fund any revenue commitments and capital expenditure that has been re-phased to later years.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

20. Members are requested to:-
  - 20.1 Agree the transfer from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to fund the final revenue budget overspend (provisionally £818k), paragraph 4 refers.
  - 20.2 Consider and note the contents of the report.

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**2022/23 Revenue Budget – Subjective Analysis**

	Revised Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000
Salaries, allowances and on-costs	66,902	68,031	1,129
Training expenses	645	631	-14
Other employee costs (inc. Insurance)	730	687	-43
Direct pension costs	2,080	2,436	356
<b>Total Employee Costs</b>	<b>70,357</b>	<b>71,785</b>	<b>1,428</b>
Repairs, maintenance and other costs	3,831	3,293	-538
Utility costs	2,273	2,510	237
<b>Total Premises Costs</b>	<b>6,104</b>	<b>5,803</b>	<b>-301</b>
Vehicle running costs	2,273	3,095	822
Travel, allowances and expenses	39	99	60
<b>Total Transport Costs</b>	<b>2,312</b>	<b>3,194</b>	<b>882</b>
Equipment and supplies	2,907	2,749	-158
Fees and services	1,212	1,208	-4
Communications and computing	5,263	4,394	-869
Other supplies and services	705	1,051	346
<b>Total Supplies and Services</b>	<b>10,087</b>	<b>9,402</b>	<b>-685</b>
Capital financing costs	873	873	0
Revenue contributions to Capital	2,357	2,073	-284
Revenue Exp Funded by Capital Under Statute	0	-297	-297
<b>Total Capital Financing</b>	<b>3,230</b>	<b>2,649</b>	<b>-581</b>
Grants and contributions	-7,601	-8,245	-644
Investment income	-192	-1,217	-1,025
Other income	-240	-424	-184
Transfers from reserves	-6,628	-4,700	1,928
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-14,661</b>	<b>-14,586</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>77,429</b>	<b>78,247</b>	<b>818</b>

**Reconciliation of reserve movement to the reserves table at Appendix 7:**

Net transfer from reserves as per outturn detailed above	-4,700
Net budget variance (Overspend) as detailed above	-818
<b>Total net transfer from revenue reserves as per Appendix 7</b>	<b>-5,518</b>

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### Significant Variances and Movements in the 2022/23 Revenue Budget

The net overspend of £818k consists of a variety of over and underspends, but it also reflects areas of spend that have been slipped to a future year because the service or activity has not taken place in the year for which funding was set aside. Hence, the necessary funding will be adjusted against the relevant reserve. The main reasons for the most significant variances are commented on below:-

#### Subjective Variance Analysis

- (a) **Salaries, allowances and on-costs (£1.129m Overspend)** – The overspend on staff pay has increased by £1.025m since the last forecast (£104k) reported to Members in February. This increase is primarily due to the additional cost (c. £1.3m) of the higher than budgeted pay award for operational staff, which had not been confirmed when the last forecast was reported to Members, so was therefore not included. This overspend is partly offset by net underspends, mainly due to in-year vacancies or reduced working hours where staff have taken flexible retirement.
- (b) **Direct Pension Costs (£356k Overspend)** – Several flexible retirements have been agreed for support staff this year, which has resulted in an overspend against this heading where a pension strain has been paid by the Authority. This is partly offset by an underspend against the salaries, allowances and on-costs heading where the occupants of those posts will now be working reduced hours until they fully retire. The other significant overspend in this area is in relation to ill-health contributions to the Firefighters' Pension Fund. The budget provides funding for two new ill-health retirements each year, but in 2022/23 there were six confirmed ill-health retirements at the end of the financial year, meaning a transfer to the Pension Fund of £579k (an overspend of £160k) was required.
- (c) **Repairs, maintenance and other costs (£538k Underspend)** – Most of this variance is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve where planned spend on various accommodation works has slipped into later years, primarily due to issues in sourcing contractors to undertake the work this financial year.
- (d) **Utility costs (£237k Overspend)** – As documented throughout the financial year, the significant increase in utility prices earlier in the year has resulted in an overspend against gas and electricity budgets, though the final overspend has reduced by £59k compared to the previous forecast.
- (e) **Vehicle running costs (£822k Overspend)** – A forecast overspend of £959k was reported to Members in February, so the outturn has reduced by £137k. This is

primarily due to a reduction in fuel costs where prices have reduced in recent months so the overspend has reduced to £365k (from a previous forecast of £406k). The overspend on vehicle servicing and maintenance costs has also reduced, to £413k (from a previous forecast of £483k), due to a delay in an external supplier undertaking some programmed work before the end of the financial year.

- (f) **Travel, allowances and expenses (£60k Overspend)** – The introduction of the new whole-time part-time contracts has resulted in an overspend on travel costs (£22k) where staff are re-imbursed for the cost of travelling to a fire station to provide crewing cover. There is also an overspend where staff are travelling to more face-to-face events as these types of events return following Covid-19.
- (g) **Equipment and supplies (£158k Underspend)** – A forecast overspend of £127k was reported to Members in February, so the outturn has reduced by £285k. This is mainly due to stock adjustments at year-end where some operational equipment had been purchased but not used prior to the end of the financial year, so the cost will not be recognised in the accounts until 2023/24. In addition, the budget for Workwear was previously forecast to overspend by £41k but the outturn was an underspend of £24k due to issues with the supply of these goods. An amount of £93k is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve due to slippage in the purchase of some items of operational equipment, including Lifejackets, Stretchers and Scene Lighting.
- (h) **Communications and computing (£869k Underspend)** – A forecast overspend of £88k was reported to Members in February, so the outturn has reduced by £957k. Around £520k of this reduction is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve where spend on a number of projects has slipped to 2023/24. This includes spend on the Customer Safety and Building Safety IT system, the workforce time and attendance system and the replacement of various IT devices. In addition, there have been lower costs than anticipated for the Kent Public Services Network, a significant saving from the new contract for Microsoft Licences, and licences for the Customer Safety and Building Safety IT System have been funded from grant rather than base budget.
- (i) **Other supplies and services (£346k Overspend)** – The majority of this overspend relates to a contribution to Kent Police for capital works undertaken at their premises for the new joint Control area at Coldharbour. This is offset by a corresponding underspend in relation to the funding for this expenditure reported at (k).
- (j) **Revenue contributions to Capital (£284k Underspend)** – This underspend is offset by a reduced transfer from the Infrastructure Reserve due to additional slippage on the capital programme.
- (k) **Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital Under Statute (£297k Underspend)** – See (i) in relation to the expenditure that is offset by this funding. The contribution to Kent Police is initially treated as revenue expenditure and charged against the

appropriate service line but it is defined as capital expenditure as it meets the statutory definition of capital expenditure i.e. the giving of a grant or contribution towards expenditure that, if incurred by the Authority, would be capital expenditure. As the spend is defined as capital expenditure it is financed in the same way as capital expenditure, so the funding is also credited to revenue. The expenditure and associated funding are both reversed out to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

- (l) **Grants and contributions (£644k Additional Income)** – The Authority has accounted for £283k of additional income since the last forecast reported to Members in February. The majority of this increase relates to additional Section 31 grants in relation to Business Rates, confirmed at the end of the financial year. In addition, there was £40k additional income in relation to the recovery of staff costs where staff are on secondment and other cost recoveries totalling £75k.
- (m) **Investment income (£1.025m Additional Income)** – Further increases to the Bank of England base rate in January and February of this year, plus additional slippage on the capital programme has meant that returns on investments continued to increase beyond the additional £876k income previously forecast.
- (n) **Other income (£184k Additional Income)** – Other income has increased by £102k since the last forecast reported to Members in February, mainly due to additional insurance recoveries totalling £98k.
- (o) **Transfers from reserves (£1.928m Decrease in net transfers)** – This variance is mainly a result of slippage on revenue and capital infrastructure projects (see Appendix 5).

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Revenue Budget – Functional Analysis

	Revised Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000
Firefighting and Rescue Services	32,634	33,277	643
Control	2,089	1,956	-133
Operational Policy and Resilience	9,644	10,504	860
Fleet and Transport	3,078	4,022	944
<b>Total Operational Response and Resilience</b>	<b>47,445</b>	<b>49,759</b>	<b>2,314</b>
Customer Safety	2,905	3,018	113
Business Safety	3,206	2,906	-300
Customer Engagement	854	887	33
<b>Total Customer, Business Safety and Engagement</b>	<b>6,965</b>	<b>6,811</b>	<b>-154</b>
Corporate Management Board and Business Support	2,136	2,209	73
Member Allowances and Expenses	78	76	-2
People and Learning	3,307	3,024	-283
Business Change and Information Technology	7,266	6,525	-741
Property, Environment and Facilities	6,913	6,814	-99
Finance, Insurance and Procurement	2,394	2,150	-244
Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance	842	819	-23
<b>Total Corporate Teams</b>	<b>22,936</b>	<b>21,617</b>	<b>-1,319</b>
Pension Cost	2,080	2,436	356
Net Financing Costs	681	-344	-1,025
Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves	-1,030	-201	829
Non-Ring Fenced Grants	-1,762	-1,942	-180
Admin for Council Tax Support	114	111	-3
<b>Total Pensions, Financing and Other Costs</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>-23</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>77,429</b>	<b>78,247</b>	<b>818</b>

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### Significant Variances and Movements in the 2022/23 Revenue Budget

#### Functional Variance Analysis

The net overspend of £818k is made up of a variety of underspend and overspends, and the reasons for the most significant variances are commented on below:-

#### Base Budget Variances

- a) **Firefighting and Rescue Services (£643k Overspend)** – The previously reported underspend on staff pay (£102k) has increased by £745k, to an overspend of £643k, mainly due to the higher than budgeted pay award for operational staff.
- b) **Control (£133k Underspend)** – The underspend on staff pay has reduced by £33k since the last forecast (£166k underspend on pay), mainly due to the higher than budgeted pay award for operational staff.
- c) **Operational Policy and Resilience (£860k Overspend)** – Staff pay costs have increased by £328k since the last forecast (£532k overspend on pay), mainly due to the higher than budgeted pay award for operational staff.
- d) **Fleet and Transport (£944k Overspend)** – The overspend has increased by £34k since the last forecast, and this is primarily due to a combination of additional costs in relation to bringing the heavy fleet maintenance function inhouse (£84k), less income from the sale of vehicles due to slippage in purchasing of replacement vehicles (£54k).
- e) **Customer Safety (£113k Overspend)** – The majority of the increase in this overspend is due to the higher than budgeted pay award for operational staff but there have also been some minor additional non-pay overspends totalling £39k.
- f) **Business Safety (£300k Underspend)** – There has been a small amount of additional underspends on pay budgets due to in-year vacancies, meaning the underspend has increased by £42k since the last forecast.
- g) **Corporate Management Board and Business Support Team (£73k Overspend)** – This overspend has reduced by £22k since the last forecast, mainly due to lower than anticipated costs on external room hire and a small amount of miscellaneous income in relation to reimbursements of costs incurred on a Safe and Well Visits research project.
- h) **People and Learning (£283k Underspend)** – This underspend has increased by £199k since the last forecast, mainly due to lower spend on staff training (£37k), a reduction in

employee-related expenses (£29k), reduced expenditure on training equipment (£19k), reduced legal fees (£8k) and additional grant income from the apprenticeship levy (£21k). In addition, there has been an additional underspend against pay budgets due to in-year vacancies.

- i) **Business Change and Information Technology (£741k Underspend)** – The majority of this underspend is explained in Appendix 2 (h) and is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve where project spend has slipped to 2023/24. Additionally, there have been lower costs than anticipated for the Kent Public Services Network and a significant saving from the new contract for Microsoft Licences.
- j) **Property, Environment and Facilities (£99k Underspend)** – An overspend of £482k was previously forecast against this heading, but this has significantly reduced mainly due to the slippage on Infrastructure spend as detailed in Appendix 2 (c).
- k) **Finance, Insurance and Procurement (£244k Underspend)** – Insurance recoveries totalling £98k have been confirmed since the last forecast (an underspend of £112k). Other additional minor net underspends total £34k.
- l) **Pension Cost (£356k Overspend)** – See Appendix 2 (b).
- m) **Net Financing Costs (£1.025m Additional Income)** – See Appendix 2 (m).
- n) **Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves (£829k lower drawdown)** – The majority of this variance is explained by the underspend on the Infrastructure Revenue Budget (see Appendix 5). This is partly offset by additional draw down from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve to fund additional project costs and temporary pay costs.
- o) **Non-Ring Fenced Grants (£180k Additional Income)** – Government grant income has increased by £168k since the last forecast, due to an increase in the Business Rates Section 31 grants due to the Authority for 2022/23, as notified by the Kent District's and Medway Council at the end of the financial year.



KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Infrastructure Budget Outturn

Figures shown are in £'000

	Revised Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Total Variance £'000
<b>Infrastructure Capital Budget</b>			
Ashford Fire Station Redevelopment	1,400	657	-743
Control Location	300	297	-3
<b>Total Station Development Programme</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>-746</b>
<b>Roofing Works</b>			
Roofing Works	789	741	-48
<b>Generators</b>			
Generators	25	27	2
<b>Boilers</b>			
Boilers	10	3	-7
<b>Total Premises</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>-53</b>
<b>Mobile Data Terminals</b>			
Mobile Data Terminals	133	36	-97
<b>Printers</b>			
Printers	166	168	2
<b>Total Information and Communication Systems</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>-95</b>
<b>Specialist Units and Vehicles</b>			
Specialist Units and Vehicles	1,777	1,632	-145
<b>Cars and Vans</b>			
Cars and Vans	759	630	-129
<b>Operational Equipment</b>			
Operational Equipment	0	44	44
<b>Total Vehicles and Equipment</b>	<b>2,536</b>	<b>2,306</b>	<b>-230</b>
<b>Total Infrastructure Capital Budget</b>	<b>5,359</b>	<b>4,235</b>	<b>-1,124</b>
<b>Infrastructure Revenue Budget</b>			
Premises	2,122	1,555	-567
Equipment	137	44	-93
Information and Comms. Systems	2,051	1,534	-517
<b>Total Infrastructure Revenue Budget</b>	<b>4,310</b>	<b>3,133</b>	<b>-1,177</b>
<b>Total Infrastructure Revenue and Capital Budgets</b>	<b>9,669</b>	<b>7,368</b>	<b>-2,301</b>
<b>Funded from:-</b>			
Base Revenue Contributions	-3,792	-3,792	-
Infrastructure Reserve	-2,770	-1,240	1,530
Capital Receipts	-1,508	-1,508	-
Internal Borrowing	-1,400	-654	746
One-off funding and grants	-199	-174	25
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>-9,669</b>	<b>-7,368</b>	<b>2,301</b>

## **KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

### **2022/23 Infrastructure Budget Outturn**

Explanations for the most significant variances on Capital and Revenue Infrastructure budgets are provided below:

#### **Infrastructure Capital Budget**

- (a) **Ashford Fire Station Redevelopment (£743k Variance)** – There has been a delay in appointing the main contractor for the major works so planned expenditure has slipped to 2023/24.
- (b) **Mobile Data Terminals (£97k Variance)** – Whilst the installation of the MDT and companion devices is now complete, work continues in relation to the development of the MDT software and the securing of a contractor to install the new cradle point aerial system, so some planned expenditure has now slipped to 2023/24.
- (c) **Specialist Unit and Vehicles (£145k Variance)** – The extended delivery timeframe for vehicle chassis' has resulted in the purchase of two specialist vehicles being slipped to 2023/24.
- (d) **Cars and Vans (£129k Variance)** – The delivery of three cars has slipped to early 2023/24 so the funding for these vehicles will be rolled forward in the Infrastructure Reserve.

#### **Infrastructure Revenue Budget**

- (e) **Premises** – see Appendix 2 explanation (e).
- (f) **Information and Comms. Systems** - see Appendix 2 explanation (j).

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
**2022/23 Revenue and Capital Reserve Balances**

Figures shown are in £'000		Opening Balance 01-Apr-22	Net Transfers 2022/23	Closing Balance 31-Mar-23
General Reserve	(A)	3,760	210	3,970
<i>Earmarked Reserves:</i>				
Government Grants	(B)	3,214	-2,047	1,167
Infrastructure	(C)	27,870	-1,240	26,630
Insurance and Resource*	(C)	4,316	-1,245	3,071
Rolling Budgets	(C)	867	-248	619
Service Transformation and Productivity	(C)	1,294	-948	346
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>		<b>37,561</b>	<b>-5,728</b>	<b>31,833</b>
<b>Total Revenue Reserves</b>		<b>41,321</b>	<b>-5,518</b>	<b>35,803</b>
Capital Receipts	(D)	9,470	386	9,856
<b>Total Capital Reserves</b>		<b>9,470</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>9,856</b>
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>		<b>50,791</b>	<b>-5,132</b>	<b>45,659</b>

\* Includes a transfer of £818k from the reserve to fund the provisional 2022/23 revenue budget overspend

Notes:

- A. Reserve held to provide a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected costs.
- B. Resource provided by Government with any unspent amounts rolled forward.
- C. Reserve held to smooth the impact of expenditure on the revenue budget.
- D. Reserve available to fund capital expenditure.

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**2022/23 Firefighters' Pension Fund**

	<b>Original Budget Estimate (Sep 2021 Home Office Return)</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Feb 2023</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance (Home Office Return)</b>
Figures shown are in £'000				
<b>Pensions Outgoings:</b>				
Pension payments	25,275	27,277	28,143	2,868
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>25,275</b>	<b>27,277</b>	<b>28,143</b>	<b>2,868</b>
<b>Pension Income:</b>				
Employee contributions	3,737	4,003	4,240	503
Employer contributions	8,324	8,663	9,049	725
In-year ill-health charge income	360	420	579	219
Income for pensions not abated	175	150	151	-24
Transfer values received	0	118	118	118
Government top-up grant	12,679	13,923	14,006	1,327
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>25,275</b>	<b>27,277</b>	<b>28,143</b>	<b>2,868</b>
<b>Net Pension Fund Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>2021/22 Top-up grant deficit</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Top-up grant requirement – 2022/23 outturn	-14,006
Top-up grant received July 2022 (80% of Sept. 2021 estimate)	10,142
<b>Top-up grant deficit for 2022/23</b>	<b>-3,864</b>

By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services  
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 29 June 2023  
Subject: FINANCIAL UPDATE FOR 2023/24  
Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

This report sets out the first financial update for the 2023/24 financial year and whilst it is still relatively early into the financial year, a summary update regarding the revenue and capital budgets and a number of other financial related issues are provided within this report.

In March 2023 the nationally agreed pay award for operational staff was settled for both the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. The 2022/23 pay award settled at 7% and the 2023/24 pay award settled at 5%. When Members approved the 2023/24 revenue budget in February 2023 the budget contained provision for a 5% pay award for 2022/23 (the offer on the table at the time) and an estimated 2% pay award for 2023/24. Consequently, there is now a significant budget pressure on operational staffing budgets this year (c. £2.125m) and, as such, this report contains a proposal, for Members approval, on how this pressure will be funded this financial year. The base budget impact of the pay awards will be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan and the revenue budget for 2024/25, when this is reviewed later in the year.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the proposed changes to the revenue budget to fund the in-year budget pressure resulting from the higher than budgeted pay award for operational staff for 2022/23 and 2023/24 (paragraph 2 refers).
2. Approve, in principle, to the potential drawdown from the Resource Reserve to meet other in-year revenue budget pressures, if the additional funding needed cannot be met from the resources within the existing base budget (paragraph 5 refers).
3. Agree 'in principle' to delegate to the Chief Executive and Chair of the Authority in discussion with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, to approve to commit up to a further £1.5m of expenditure if required for the implementation of the new joint control system (paragraph 9 and 10 refer).

4. Agree to a 10 year lease in relation to new commercial premises required for the Vehicle Servicing and Maintenance workshop (paragraph 13 refers).
5. Note the remaining contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Barrie Fullbrook – Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext. 8264  
EMAIL: [barrie.fullbrook@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:barrie.fullbrook@kent.fire-uk.org)  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Budgets for 2023/24

1. **Revenue Budget Virements (Budget Changes) Processed** - On 21 February 2023, Members approved a net revenue budget of £85.292m for 2023/24. It has since been necessary to process a number of technical budget adjustments (primarily due to the reprofiling of spend across financial years), and although the budget adjustments have no effect on the overall net revenue budget of £85.292m, they will have an impact on the Functional and Subjective analyses of the budget. Reportable budget changes are detailed below:
  - As set out in paragraph 8 below, less capital funding is needed in 2023/24 than previously expected, so there is a net reduction of £3.585m in the budget for Revenue Contributions to Capital, offset by a reduced draw down from the Infrastructure Reserve, due to spend on the Ashford Fire Station and Live Fire Training Facility project (£3.974m) and some vehicle purchases (£258k) slipping to 2024/25, partly offset by an increase where budgets have slipped from 2022/23 to 2023/24 (£436k) or have been brought forward from 2024/25 to 2023/24 (£211k).
  - A net increase of £303k in revenue infrastructure expenditure budgets, offset by a transfer from the Infrastructure reserve, primarily due to slippage of revenue infrastructure project spend from 2022/23 to 2023/24.
  - A net increase of £191k in staffing budgets, offset by a transfer from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve to fund various temporary posts in 2023/24 where start dates have now been confirmed.
  - A net increase of £151k in day-to-day revenue expenditure budgets, offset by a transfer from the Rolling Budget Reserve where committed expenditure has slipped from 2022/23 into 2023/24.
  
2. **Revenue Budget Virement for Member Approval** – The approved revenue budget for 2023/24 contains provision for a 5% pay award, effective from 1 July 2022 and a 2% pay award effective from 1 July 2023 for operational staff. However, the final nationally agreed pay settlement, agreed in March 2023, was for a 7% pay award, effective from 1 July 2022 and a 5% pay award effective from 1 July 2023. It is, therefore, now necessary to increase the operational staffing budgets by £2.125m to fund the additional cost that will fall in 2023/24 as a result of these pay awards. Individual virements that are not technical budget adjustments, that exceed £500k, of which this is one, require Member approval. As such, set out below are the necessary budget adjustments that need to take place in order to fund the shortfall in the operational staff pay award in 2023/24, and therefore Members are asked to approve these virements.

- A £690k reduction in the budget for the revenue provision for the repayment of borrowing. Due to slippage on expenditure on the Ashford Fire Station and Live Fire Training Facility this funding is no longer required in 2023/24;
  - A £422k reduction in the budgeted transfer to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve intended to provide a one-off funding resource for temporary posts and project work, which is not needed in 2023/24;
  - A £250k reduction in the budget earmarked for innovation and collaboration which is a discretionary budget so expenditure in this area can be reduced accordingly;
  - A £200k reduction in the budget earmarked for station refurbishments where additional funding had initially been provided this year but will now be removed;
  - A £60k reduction across various budgets of discretionary spend where historic spend suggests that there is currently a slight over-provision enabling additional savings to be taken;
  - A £235k reduction in the operational overtime budget where spend had reduced further than anticipated in the latter part of 2022/23 meaning the budget provision for 2023/24 will now be more aligned to the most recent levels of spend and current outturn projections for 2023/24;
  - A £112k reduction in the staffing budget for Corporate Management Board where the Assistant Director – Corporate Services post has been deleted.
  - A £97k reduction in the staffing budget for the Property and Facilities team following a restructure and deletion of a post;
  - A £59k reduction in the staffing budget for the Property and Facilities team where the cost of a specific post will be capitalised this year in line with capitalisation regulations.
3. Some of the budget reductions detailed above only provide a temporary funding resource as the base budget will be required to fund the relevant expenditure in later years e.g. although the revenue provision for the repayment of borrowing in relation to the Ashford Fire Station and Live Fire Training Facility is no longer required this year, funding for a revenue provision will be required in the future. The Medium Term Financial Plan for 2024/25 – 2027/28 will be updated to include the higher than budgeted pay awards and the impact will be reflected in base budget savings proposals going forward.
4. **Revenue Forecast Outturn** - It is still very early in the financial year, so the forecast outturn remains in line with the current budget, consequently a detailed forecast position is not presented to Members in this report. However, a number of areas that will be monitored closely over the coming months have been highlighted below:



- **Support Staff Pay Costs** – The nationally agreed pay award for support staff has not yet been confirmed for 2023/24. In February, the National Employers put forward an offer of a flat £1,925 increase or £3.88%, whichever is the greater, but this has since been rejected by the trade unions. The approved budget for 2023/24 includes provision for a 2% pay award for all support staff, and every 1% increase will add around £180k to the Authority's costs. The pay offer put forward by the National Employers in February would result in an overspend against support staff pay budgets of around £600k. All support staff posts are reviewed when they become vacant to determine if they are still required or if a budget saving can be taken by working differently and deleting the post from the establishment so these decisions could also have an impact on the final outturn.
- **Gold Book Pay** – This pay group relates to 4 people in the organisation, namely the Chief Executive and the three Directors. Pay awards given to this group are always effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> January each year and are nationally set pay awards, although the governance arrangements within this Authority are such that any proposed award to this group of people is always approved by the Senior Officer Appointments and Conditions Committee (SOAC). Nationally there was an offer made of 4% from January 2022 and 3.5% from January 2023. However, given the current financial constraints the four personal whom this affects, all offered not to accept the full 4% from January 2022, but proposed a reduced offer of a 2% award for that year. SOAC committee, on the 21 March 2023, therefore agreed the award of 2% and 3.5% respectively. Currently within the budget for 2023/24 is an assumption of 2% in relation to pay award that would be effective from 1 January 2024.
- **Inflation** – There was a smaller-than-expected fall in CPI inflation from 10.1% in March 2023 to 8.7% in April 2023. The bulk of the fall was due to a plunge in utility price inflation from 85.6% in March to 24.3% in April. Utility price inflation will take another big step down when the Ofgem price cap falls to an average of £2,074 p/a in July 2023. Core inflation increased from 6.2% in March to 6.8% in April, taking it above the recent peak of 6.5% in September of last year and to the highest rate since 1992. Core goods inflation increased from 5.7% to 6.6% and services inflation rose from 6.6% in March to 6.9% in April. The cost of some goods or services procured by the Authority may increase beyond current expectations if inflation levels continue to remain elevated.
- **Interest Rates** – The Bank of England interest rate rose to its highest level in 15 years on 12 May 2023 when it increased to 4.5%. The latest CPI release has had an impact on the forecast for base rates over the short-medium term, and as such, Bloomberg have now amended their forecasts to show an increase in the peak which is now projected at between 5.25% and 5.50% in November 2023, and

staying elevated throughout 2024. If interest rates do continue to rise income from investments may be higher than currently forecast.

- **Vehicle Repairs and Maintenance** – The servicing and maintenance of heavy fleet vehicles was brought in house on 1 April 2023, so budgets in this area will be monitored closely this year. The 2023/24 capital budget includes provision for the purchase of several new appliances and other vehicles so this should have a positive impact on the cost of repairs and maintenance but this will be dependant on when the new vehicles are delivered this financial year.
  - **Vehicle Fuel** – Whilst the cost of fuel has stabilised over the last few months, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) made an announcement in April 2023 that they would be cutting production for the rest of the calendar year in response to a drop in economic output globally, causing an increase in the cost of oil. It is therefore possible, that the cost of fuel may change again before the end of the financial year which may impact on costs.
  - **Utilities** – Looking beyond July 2023, Ofgem is consulting on changes to the modelling and policy around the cap and the government is also looking at new measures which will impact energy bills. While such moves could lead to lower prices beyond current predictions, there is no expectation that any of these changes will see a return to historic norms. Any changes that are implimented going forward could have an impact on the Authority's costs.
5. It is likely that the Authority will face an additional unavoidable in-year budget pressure again this year, if the support staff pay award settles at anything higher than the provision set aside of 2%. There could also be further inflationary pressure in some budget areas, which exceed the assumptions reflected in the 2023/24 budget. Whilst every effort will be made to contain any cost pressures that do arise within the existing budget base, Members are asked to agree, in principle, to a drawdown from the Resource reserve, should that be necessary, to bridge the cost gap.
6. **Grants Update**
- **Building Safety Grants** - In April 2023, the Government announced that a further £12m worth of Protection funding would be provided to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in 2023/24. As in previous years, this funding is intended to further increase the capability and capacity within fire protection. The amount awarded to the Authority for 2023/24 is in line with the amount received in 2022/23 (£406k). In addition, another new grant was also provided, the Building Safety Regulator grant, worth £25.9m nationally, which has been made available over the course of 3 years to recruit and train new Fire Protection staff to support the work of the new Building Safety Regulator to regulate higher-risk buildings. The Authority can reclaim up to £143k of costs per annum from this grant.

- **Firelink Grant (Airwave Radio Communications)** – The Firelink grant has been confirmed at £355k for 2023/24, a further 20% reduction on the grant received in 2022/23. Funding will continue to reduce by 20% a year based on the 2021/22 baseline, with the grant ceasing after 2025/26.
  - **New Dimensions Grants** - The Home Office had originally proposed reducing the number of teams receiving the grant from 19 to 14 teams nationally from April 2024. This has now been deferred for at least a further year to April 2025, so the grant for the Authority will be unchanged for 2023/24 and 2024/25 at £1.012m per annum, with a review of the funding expected for 2025/26.
7. **Capital Budget** - In February, Members agreed a capital budget of £16.492m for 2023/24, the majority of which relates to the redevelopment of Ashford Fire Station and the Live Fire Training Facility (£9.77m), plus £1.8m for various other estate related redevelopment works, £1.26m for a lease arrangement due to bringing the heavy fleet maintenance function inhouse and £270k for other minor premises works. A further £3.234m has been allocated for replacement of vehicles and appliances and £158k for the upgrade to Mobile Data Terminals.
  8. Since the budget was agreed, slippage on the Ashford Fire Station and Live Fire Training Facility has meant that the budget for 2023/24 has been reduced by £3.974m, mainly due to delays in procuring a contractor for the major works. There have been further budget reductions totalling £258k where some specialist vehicle purchases have been slipped to 2024/25 due to the lead times for delivery of the vehicles. These budget reductions are partly offset by an increase totalling £647k, where budgets amounting to £436k have been rolled forward from 2022/23 due to slippage and £211k has been brought forward from 2024/25 as some vehicle replacements are now expected in 2023/24.
  9. **Control NFSP Partnership** - KFRS recently joined the Networked Fire Services Partnership (NFSP) as a fourth partner along with Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Dorset and Wiltshire and Devon and Somerset fire and rescue services. Our current contract with STORM steria finishes in 2025 and the system that the NFSP uses finishes in 2025, presenting a good opportunity for the Authority to explore potential system change and a closer working relationship, which will enable support with call-taking and mobilising.
  10. The initial implementation budget was set some time ago for our share of the system replacement and whilst it is still hoped to be able to contain costs within this envelope, we are aware through market engagement and recent system replacements that costs are currently higher than anticipated due not only to the economic climate but the specialism of the system required and the limited market providers. As a result the Authority may need to approve a higher level of expenditure in order to proceed with the system replacement. Given the timing of the current procurement process, the date of the next Authority meeting and not wanting to hold up the procurement within the

partnership, Members are requested to agree 'in principle' to delegate to the Chief Executive and Chair of the Authority in discussion with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, to approve to commit up to a further £1.5m of expenditure if required and report to the Authority at the next available meeting.

11. **Vehicle Servicing and Maintenance** - I am pleased to report that the Vehicle Servicing and Maintenance function was successfully brought in-house in April 2023, having transferred across from the Kent Commercial Services Group. As part of this move the lease of the Maidstone unit was transferred across to KFRS. However, it was acknowledged at the time that the lease on this building would not be the best medium to long term solution, therefore Members made an 'in principle;' agreement to take on the lease of another fit for purpose building which would overlap the Maidstone lease for a short period.
12. The terms of the lease for the Maidstone unit originally started in August 2018 and is due to end in August 2028, however, there is a break clause after 5 years (originally forecast for December 2023), which can be activated by serving notice to the landlord 6 months prior to the break-date. There was a risk that KFRS would not have sufficient time to make the decision to activate the break clause (if required), therefore, as part of the negotiations with the landlord, it was agreed that the break date could be moved to June 2024.
13. However, discussions have now taken place with regards to the lease of a unit in Aylesford, which meets the longer-term requirements of the service provision. To accommodate this change in location and undertake works to refurbish the alternative commercial unit, there will be an overlap of leases before the break clause from the Maidstone unit in June 2024 takes effect. It is expected that the lease for the Aylesford unit (two units next door to each other) will be agreed in August 2023 (although negotiations are still ongoing) and the terms of the lease will be for 10 years, with a 5-year break-clause. This means KFRS will be leasing commercial units in relation to vehicle servicing and maintenance until August 2033 if the full 10-years are used. As such Members are asked to agree to this new lease for a maximum of 10 years and an estimate of the funding required to cover the cost of the 10-year lease has been built into the Capital Programme.
14. **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** - Members will be aware that at this time of the year we start to review in more detail our MTFP. Work on updating spending plans and the modelling of various funding scenarios will continue over the coming months, with proposed assumptions in the development of the MTFP presented to Members at the October Authority meeting.

## Treasury Update 2023/24

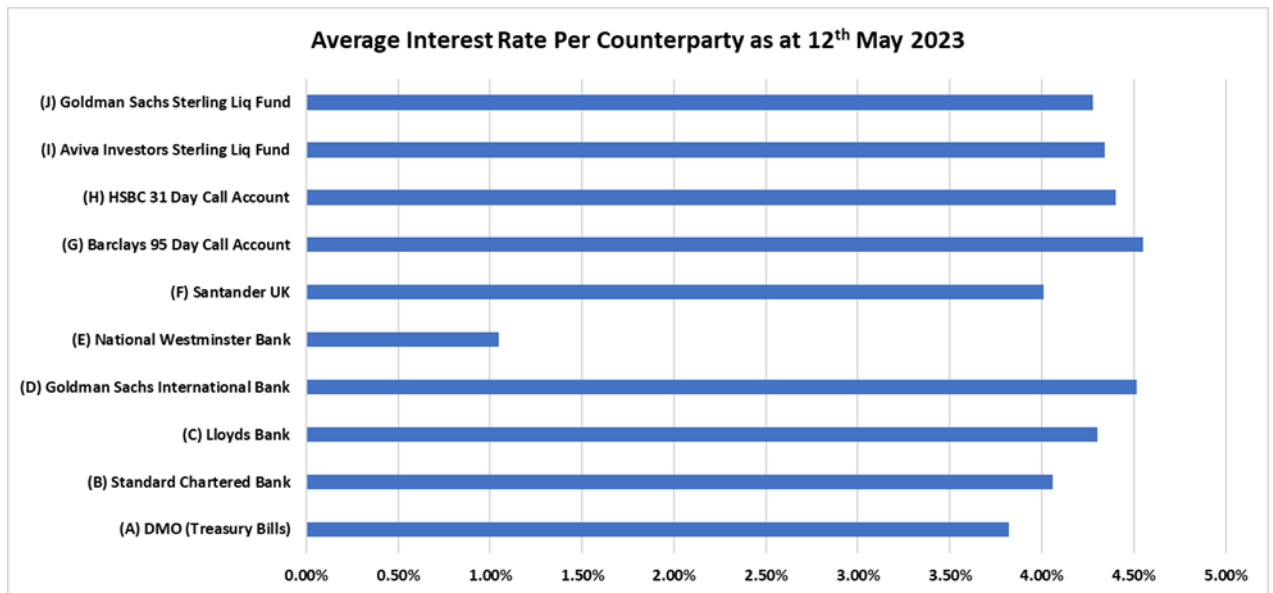
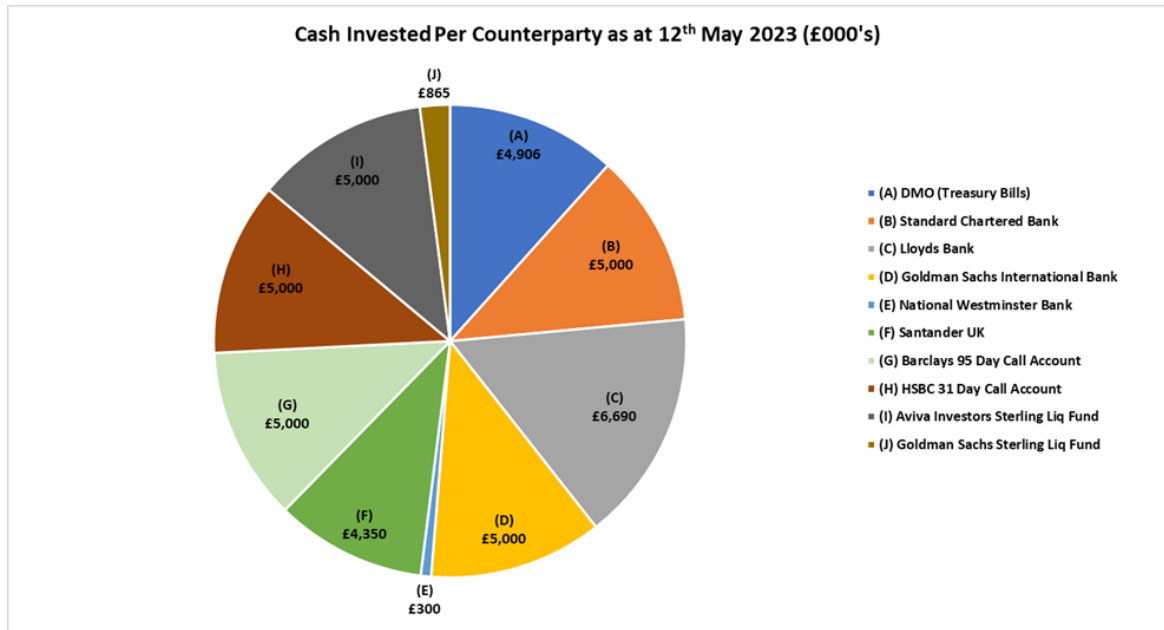
15. **Capital Plan** – As detailed at paragraph 8, the capital expenditure budget for 2023/24 has been updated to reflect the latest forecast outturn on capital spend for this financial year. A summary extract from the latest capital expenditure plan, for the current and following three financial years, and the funding resources being used to finance the estimated expenditure is shown in **Table 1**. In addition, the projections for the Authority's borrowing need (Capital Financing Requirement) have also been updated to match the revised expenditure and funding profile, and is shown in **Table 2**.

<b>Table 1</b> <b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>2023/24</b> <b>Forecast</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2024/25</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2025/26</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2026/27</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£'000</b>
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>12,907</b>	<b>10,765</b>	<b>12,271</b>	<b>5,901</b>
Funded by:				
Revenue / Capital Receipts	-5,793	-4,601	-12,271	-5,901
<b>Net Financing (Borrowing) Need for the Year</b>	<b>7,114</b>	<b>6,164</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Table 2</b> <b>Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)</b>	<b>2023/24</b> <b>Forecast</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2024/25</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2025/26</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2026/27</b> <b>Estimate</b> <b>£'000</b>
Opening CFR	1,654	8,195	13,064	12,257
Movement in CFR	6,541	4,869	-807	-810
<b>Closing CFR</b>	<b>8,195</b>	<b>13,064</b>	<b>12,257</b>	<b>11,447</b>
Movement in CFR represented by:				
Net Financing (Borrowing) Need for the Year	7,114	6,164	0	0
Less: Provision for Principal	-573	-1,294	-807	-810
<b>Movement in CFR</b>	<b>6,541</b>	<b>4,870</b>	<b>-807</b>	<b>-810</b>

16. **Treasury Management** – As at 12 May 2023, the Authority has a cash balance of £42.1m invested. The pie chart below shows the cash invested per counterparty, which has a forecast investment income for the year of £1.8m, compared to £1.4m as estimated in February 2023 when the budget was set for the year. If this level of return materialises, this additional income will provide some capacity to bridge potential in-year

funding shortfalls which may arise, as set out earlier in this report. The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee announced it has raised interest rates this month for the twelfth meeting in a row. As a result, the Authority has seen an increase in the average rate earned on cash balances, which is currently at 4.23%. The bar chart below details current interest rate levels paid on these deposits.



## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- It is possible that the Authority will face additional unavoidable in-year budget pressures this year so budgets will be monitored closely and consideration will be given to existing base budgets to determine whether it is possible to re-align some or all of a specific

budget to meet in-year budget pressures. Where additional costs cannot be met from within existing budget allocations it may be necessary to drawdown from the Resource reserve to fund these additional costs. Members will be kept regularly updated on any such need that may arise.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

18. Members are requested to:
  - 18.1 Approve the proposed changes to the revenue budget to fund the in-year budget pressure resulting from the higher than budgeted pay awards for operational staff for 2022/23 and 2023/24 (paragraph 2 refers).
  - 18.2 Approve, in principle, to the potential drawdown from the Resource Reserve to meet other in-year revenue budget pressures, if the additional funding needed cannot be met from the resources within the existing base budget (paragraph 5 refers);
  - 18.3 Agree 'in principle' to delegate to the Chief Executive and Chair of the Authority in discussion with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, to approve to commit up to a further £1.5m of expenditure if required in relation to implementation of the new joint control system (paragraph 9 and 10 refer);
  - 18.4 Agree to a 10 year lease in relation to new commercial premises required for the Vehicle servicing and Maintenance workshop (paragraph 13 refers);
  - 18.5 Note the remaining contents of the report.

*This page has been left blank*



By: Clerk to the Authority

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 29 June 2023

Subject: APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR THE  
AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 sets out in legislation the requirement on audit committees of a combined authority to have at least one independent person on its membership. This report seeks Members approval to the appointment of an Independent Member to this Authority's Audit and Governance Committee following a successful interview process.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the appointment of Jennifer Waterman as the Independent Member for this Authority's Audit and Governance Committee for a period of four years and as set out in legislation (paragraph 7 refers)

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Clerk to Authority – Marie Curry  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext 8291  
EMAIL: marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## **COMMENTS**

### **Background**

1. Audit Committees are a key component of any authority's governance framework and are there to provide an independent and high level resource to support good governance and strong public financial management. It also provides independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes. By overseeing internal and external audit, it makes an important contribution to ensuring that effective assurance arrangements are in place.
2. The core functions that an Audit Committee should undertake must reflect both standard practice as well as specific legislative and professional standards. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) recommended good practice sets out these core functions.
3. The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 sets out in legislation the requirement on audit committees of a combined authority to have at least one independent person to serve as part of its membership.

### **The Role of an Independent Member**

4. The inclusion of an Independent Member for this Committee will assist in strengthening the Committee's assurance to the Authority of its good governance and financial standards whilst reinforcing its independence.

### **Recruitment Process and Appointment of the Independent Member**

5. At the Authority meeting on 21 February 2023, Members agreed for the Audit and Governance Committee to approve the job advertisement, job description and person specification for the role. The Committee met and gave approval to this on 20 April 2023.
6. After the closing date for the advertisement, shortlistings took place by a Panel of Members comprising of the Chair of the Authority (Nick Chard), the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee (Vince Maple) plus the Lib Dem Opposition Member (Mike Sole).
7. Interviews for the role took place with the same Panel of Members on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 and following a successful process, the Panel now recommends to the Authority that Jennifer Waterman is appointed as the Independent Member for the Audit and

Governance Committee for a period of four years. Jennifer has experience of working within a senior capacity for various organisations as well as for the Financial Conduct Authority, a role that she has now retired from.

8. Jennifer is currently the Independent Person (IP) for this Authority, a role which agreement is in place with Kent County Council (KCC), that should there be any conflicts, holidays or sickness, KCC's IP will substitute for this Authority's IP and vice versa.

#### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9. The Audit and Governance Committee meets three times a year. A remuneration of £150 per meeting attendance, which includes preparation and reading time of reports, will be paid on the submission of an invoice by the Independent Member. Travel expenses for the role will also be paid at the current rate. The costs for this role will be contained within existing budgets.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

10. Members are requested to
  - 10.1 Approve the appointment of Jennifer Waterman as the Independent Member for this Authority's Audit and Governance Committee for a period of four years and as set out in legislation (paragraph 7 refers).

*This page has been left blank*

By: Chief Executive  
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 29 June 2023  
Subject: INFORMATION UPDATE  
Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR INFORMATION**

### **SUMMARY**

This information update covers the following topics:

- A.** Inspection Update (paragraphs 1 to 3).
- B.** Performance Outturn and Update (paragraphs 4 to 16 refer and **Appendix 1** refer).
- C.** Response and Resilience Update (paragraphs 17 to 23 refer).
- D.** Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement, Customer Feedback and Safety Update (paragraphs 24 to 51 refer).
- E.** Freedom of Information update (paragraphs 52 to 59 refer).
- F.** Pensions and Pensions Board Update (paragraph 60 and **Appendix 2** refer).

### **CONCLUSION**

Members are requested to:

1. Consider and note the contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: See each section  
TELEPHONE NUMBER:  
EMAIL:  
BACKGROUND PAPERS:

## COMMENTS

### Background

#### A. Inspection and National Issues Update

*Lead/Contact Officer: Nicola Harryman – Head of Data Intelligence*

01622 692121 ext 8455, [nicola.harryman@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:nicola.harryman@kent.fire-uk.org)

1. At the time of this meeting, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services have begun round three of their inspection programme. Members will be aware that earlier this year we received our round two results and we do not expect our next inspection date to be until the summer of 2024 at the earliest. Once the first set of reports are published from round three, we will analyse the results for emerging themes and report these at a future meeting.
2. At the end of March this year His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services published the spotlight report into values and culture in fire and rescue services which was drawn from evidence collected through earlier inspections. This report provided 35 recommendations which are applicable across fire and rescue services, Government and national fire bodies.
3. The Authority is reviewing all of the emerging documents across the sector, such as the spotlight report mentioned above, the London Fire Brigade culture report, the Baroness Casey review, the Manchester Arena Inquiry report, and the recently published Fire Standards including leading the service, leading and developing people and the code of ethics.

#### B. Performance Update

*Lead/Contact Officer: Nicola Harryman – Head of Data Intelligence*

01622 692121 ext 8455, [nicola.harryman@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:nicola.harryman@kent.fire-uk.org)

### Summary of Performance

4. This update provides Members with an overview of the Authority's performance for April 2023 as well as performance against the three-year average targets for the period 2021-24.
5. In April 2,694 emergency calls were received in the Authority's control room which is lower than levels seen in the previous year. The Authority has attended 295 fires so far this year which is lower than the same period in previous years. The three-year average projection for the 2021-24 period is 4,714 which is higher than the target of 4,210.
6. Accidental fires accounted for 56% of the total fires attended so far this financial year and, as a result of these fires, five people have suffered fire related injuries.
7. In recent years the Authority has reported the lowest ever number of accidental fires in the home. So far this year 36 incidents have been attended which is lower than the

levels seen in the previous years. The current projection for the medium-term period (2021-24) is 580 which is 9.0% lower than the target of 532. The projection will have been impacted by the increase in house fires experienced last year. Caution should be taken with the projections due to the relatively low numbers involved.

8. The Authority has attended 97 road traffic collisions so far this financial year which is consistent with the same period in the previous year. As a result of these incidents one person has died and 11 have been seriously injured.
9. So far this year 65.32% of life-threatening incidents were reached within 10 minutes and 78.83% within 12 minutes. Overall performance is lower than the targets set for these indicators. Performance against response time targets has declined in recent years, and there are multiple factors affecting the outcomes. Detailed analysis is currently being undertaken to highlight where improvements can be made and will be factored into the Community Risk Management Plan process. Further updates will be available in the coming months.
10. The Authority attended life-threatening fire incidents within 10 minutes on 70% occasions whilst life-threatening road traffic collisions were reached within 10 minutes on 58% of occasions. Non-life threatening incidents were attended within 15 minutes on 91% of occasions.
11. The Authority's Customer Safety teams have delivered 859 Safe and Well Visits to customers across Kent and Medway so far this year. In addition to these visits, 1,982 Home Safety Visits have been carried out by on duty crews and the Home Safety Visit Taskforce.
12. 98.5% of building consultations received (135 of 137) have been completed within 21 days so far this year. Business Safety teams have also carried out 103 audits of business premises so far this year in line with the Authority's risk based inspection programme.
13. The Authority aims to have a minimum of 32 with an aspiration of 44 fire engines available day and night across Kent and Medway as detailed in the recently agreed Safety and Wellbeing plan. The number of fire engines available is heavily influenced by the availability of on-call firefighters and can therefore fluctuate over a 24 hour period. So far this year the average number of fire engines available has been 32 during the day (9am-6pm) and 47 in the evening (6pm to 9am).
14. So far this year, 2.22% of all contracted hours have been lost due to sickness. Operational staff have lost 2.14% of contracted hours to sickness and Corporate teams staff have lost 2.67%.
15. **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995:** RIDDOR-reportable injuries are those that the Authority is required to report to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous

Occurrences Regulations 1995. So far this year one RIDDOR-reportable injury has been recorded.

16. **Deaths in fires and road traffic collisions since the previous meeting of the Authority:** At the time of writing, there has been one fire-related death, which occurred near Sevenoaks. There has been a total of six deaths resulting from road traffic collisions. Of these the first occurred on 27 February on the A299 near Herne Bay, involving two cars and a van, which resulted in the death of the driver of one of the cars. The second was a single car road traffic collision on 2 April in Broadstairs where the driver was killed as a result of their car striking a lamppost. The third, which occurred on 28 May, was the death of a driver resulting from their car exiting the road and falling down a cliff in Kingsdown. On 5 June near Woodchurch, Ashford, a lorry and a car collided, killing both the driver and the passenger of the car. The final incident was a death of a driver caused by their car striking road barriers on the A249 near Stockbury on 12 June.

### **C. Response and Resilience Update**

*Lead/Contact Officer: Mark Rist - Director, Response and Resilience*  
01622 692121 ext 8231, [mark.rist@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:mark.rist@kent.fire-uk.org)

17. The Exercise Planning Group have arranged three exercises during 2023-24 which Members are invited to attend. The first of these exercises was held on Monday 05 June 2023 at Dreamland, Margate and tested the Authority's response to a chemical attack which caused burns to several members of the public. As part of the exercise, the casualties were moved to a car park to receive triage and treatment. The mobile decontamination unit was set up, after which mass decontamination of casualties was carried out. Kent Police, SECamb, the NHS, and National Resilience also participated and the exercise involved approximately 50 volunteers who played the role of casualties. Further exercises are planned for later in the year (scenario: large industrial fire with impacts on a local hospital) and Spring 2024 (scenario: light aircraft crash during an air display, resulting in multiple casualties). Once the arrangements have been confirmed, the dates and information will be provided to the Clerk to the Authority, who will update Members.

### **Focus on Noteworthy Incidents**

18. This brings to Members' attention a more in-depth look at some significant incidents that have gone through the Authority's formal debriefing process. The types of incidents that will be brought to Members' attention will be those that are considered noteworthy due to factors such as: the firefighting and rescue techniques employed; the equipment and resources used; customer care and joint working; and what was learnt as a result of the incident.
19. The incidents that are focused on in this meeting are as follows: a fire in an electric car in Goudhurst on 16/11/2022; and a large fire in a domestic house in Womenswold on 17/02/2023.



20. The Authority has a well-established debriefing process which is overseen by the Operational Learning Team and brings together those who were involved in an incident, exercise or event, to understand the actions that were undertaken and the effectiveness of the response. The debriefing process also considers any interactions the Authority may have had before or after the event. Any learning and areas for improvement are identified, agreed upon, logged and have progress against implementation tracked and recorded.
21. There is naturally a timescale involved in the debriefing process, of which the key stages are: the organisation of the debriefs, post-debrief analysis, report writing, review, and final approval. It takes approximately seven weeks from incident to debrief and then a further two to three weeks for report writing and final approval. At the time of writing, eight incidents have gone through a formal debriefing process this calendar year, with a further seven in progress.
22. To date this Authority is the only UK fire and rescue service to have received accreditation from the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) for our structured debriefing process. This has been achieved as a result of the IFE's recognition of the quality and rigour of our debriefing process.
23. Information about the most recent incidents that have occurred across Kent and Medway may be found on the Authority's website at the following link:  
<https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/incidents>

**D. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update**

*Lead/Contact Officer: Jon Quinn - Director, Protection, Prevention, Customer Engagement and Safety 01622 692121 ext 7806, [jon.quinn@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:jon.quinn@kent.fire-uk.org)*

24. This section of the report provides Members with an update on the current activities, campaigns and initiatives within the Building Safety; Customer Safety; Customer Experience and Behaviour Change; and Engagement teams.

**Building Safety**

25. The Risk Information team are investigating the use of 3D cameras to display risk information in a more efficient way. The cameras will be used to record video footage, which will give the feel of being inside the building looking around. This equipment will have other benefits including enhancing training for new inspection officers or assisting with information gathering during enforcement activities.
26. The Building Safety Act 2022 came into force on 28 June 2022, making clear how residential buildings within its scope should be constructed, maintained and made safe. The Building Safety team are working closely with other Fire and Rescue Services in the South East region to adopt a joint approach to working within the new Building Safety Regulator structure. Gateway 2 will start in October 2023, which will focus on the pre-construction phase of a building.

27. As part of the Authority's regulatory duties, a company which cannot be named until sentenced, offered a guilty plea for charges under Articles 8, 9, 13 and 14 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, following enforcement action taken by the service's Building Safety team. Sentencing is due to take place in July. KFRS remains committed to ensuring that all buildings in Kent and Medway are fire safety compliant.
28. The Fire Engineering and Risk Inspection teams are working together to provide structured inter-team technical training. This will provide additional resilience and capacity to prepare for upcoming changes to legislation, whilst ensuring a co-ordinated approach to responding to building consultation requests.

### **Community Insight and Partnerships**

29. Putting customers at the heart of everything remains a key focus of the Authority's Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy. The Collaboration and Behaviour Change teams have been brought together to form a new Community Insight and Partnerships Team. The name change will make it clearer to partners and KFRS colleagues that the team is responsible for gathering information from underrepresented groups and supporting communities through partnership working.
30. As a partner of the Kent Community Safety Team, the Authority worked to deliver a county wide conference in March, on the topic of Violence Against Women and Girls. This enabled people to attend in person or online. There were a number of speakers, including Kellie Major, the organisation's Customer Safety Lead, who presented on how we support our staff and customers.
31. The Community Insight and Partnerships and Building Safety teams are working with local partners to share information with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children on what actions to take in the event of a fire. The customer insight project shows that knowing the correct number to call and reacting in the event of a fire are key messages to promote. The Authority remains committed to ensuring everyone can access our services.

### **Customer Safety**

32. Safeguarding training continues to be delivered across the Service. Station Leaders are now receiving enhanced Level 2 safeguarding training and a bespoke session has been prepared for Control room colleagues to support their handling of emergency calls. The Authority is working hard to ensure all colleagues meet national safeguarding competency standards.
33. The Customer Safety and Response and Resilience teams are working together to deliver Home Fire Safety Visits in the most efficient way. Firefighters are focussing on defined areas and carrying out Home Fire Safety Visits in customers' homes;

Response Assessment intelligence visits in businesses; along with other activity, such as hydrant checks.

34. Two Home Fire Safety Visit days were held during May. These days bring together teams from across the organisation, including our volunteers, to work with Wholetime firefighters across the county to install smoke alarms and share fire safety advice in customers' homes. Working as one team enables the organisation to cover a wide area promoting fire safety and bring colleagues together across the Service. To complement this activity, a social media campaign was developed to amplify fire safety messaging and to recommend asking for identification to help promote awareness of scams.

### **Customer Experience**

35. Providing an excellent experience for all its customers continues to be a priority for the Authority. One method the Customer Experience team use is to map the journey taken by customers when accessing one of the Authority's services. For example, the team have recently worked with colleagues in the fire command and control centre to map interactions with operational crews. This has highlighted a number of opportunities for improvement which are being considered as part of the project looking at the command and control systems. The next stage of the research will look at interactions with members of the public calling 999.
36. In a similar way, the team have worked with colleagues in Customer Safety, to map customer journeys for home fire safety visit booking and school-based education. The outcomes of this research, which includes hearing from the external customers accessing these services, will be used to improve the customer experience. The customer experience is often expressed as a simple equation which measures the emotions, the effort required and the success of the interaction from the customer's perspective. The team then identify opportunities to enhance the customer experience, which in turn leads to better emotions and feelings, less effort required and greater success for the customers in achieving their aims.
37. The team are also supporting a programme to transform internal customer experience, for example support services provided to operational stations. This is important as it is known that a customer focused approach improved both efficiency and effectiveness. To support the programme, our partners at iESE have been commissioned to help identify opportunities for improvement, which includes simplifying processes such as ordering and distribution.

### **Compliments received in 2022/23**

38. The number of compliments received by the Authority is shown in Table 1. The number of compliments received has increased significantly again this year as customers are more actively encouraged to provide feedback. It is also important to note that the Authority continues to receive far more compliments than complaints (129 versus 59 respectively). Compliments received as part of feedback gathered

through surveys, for example after a home fire safety visit, are not included within these figures (see below).

39. Operational incidents continue to make up the majority of compliments but, home fire safety visits, school visits, events and campaigns also attracted compliments. It is also pleasing to note the comments about colleagues going above and beyond to meet customers' needs, on some occasions outside of their normal duties.

**Table 1: Number of formal compliments received**

Year	Compliments Received
2022/23	129
2021/22	96
2020/21	89

**Complaints received in 2022/23**

40. The number of complaints also increased in 2022/23 in comparison with recent years, although the number of founded complaints continues to remain very low for an Authority of this size. As with previous years, the most frequent reason for a founded complaint continues to be driving and there are no other trends that can be identified from the low number of complaints.
41. The process for complaining was made easier as part of the new Customer Feedback Policy, which may account for the increase. Whilst all complainants are still encouraged to submit complaints in writing this is no longer a requirement to ensure the process is fully accessible to everyone. All complainants are made aware of the appeals process but there were no appeals received during 2022/23.

**Table 2: Complaints made to the Authority**

Year	Founded/partially founded	Unfounded	Totals*
2022/23	23	21	44*
2021/22	11	13	24*
2020/21	14	19	35

\*In 2023/23 a further 15 complaints were withdrawn. In 2021/22 six complaints were withdrawn; in 2020/21 one complaint was withdrawn. Withdrawn complaints are not counted in the totals above.

## Other Customer Feedback

42. In addition to the formal process for complaints and compliments outlined above, customers are actively encouraged, via surveys, to provide feedback on the services they have received from the Authority. However, in line with the Customer Feedback Policy, any clear expressions of dissatisfaction are dealt with as complaints and included in the totals above. These surveys provide a wealth of insight about the quality of the service provided and the customers' perceptions and expectations of the Authority.

## Home Fire Safety Visits

43. Customers receiving a Safe and Well or Home Fire Safety Visit are asked for feedback on the service they have received. The information received is discussed regularly with team leaders and used to support continuous improvement. A summary of the main findings is included in Tables 3, 4 and 5 below which shows an incredibly high level of satisfaction and an improvement on last year's excellent results. A similar process has recently been introduced for Building Safety interactions and operational incidents but insufficient responses were received in 2022/23 to allow reporting this year.

**Table 3: Overall, how happy are you with the service you received?**

Overall satisfaction	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Other
2022/23	1117 (94.9%)	56 (4.8%)	4 (0.3%)
2021/22	925 (93.2%)	56 (5.6%)	11 (1.1%)

**Table 4: Do you feel safer as a result of the home visit?**

Feeling safer	Yes	No or unsure
2022/23	1147 (97.4%)	30 (2.5%)
2021/22	966 (97.0%)	29 (2.8%)

**Table 5: How likely is it that you would recommend Kent Fire and Rescue Service to a friend or colleague? (Net Promoter Score<sup>1</sup>)**

---

<sup>1</sup> Net Promoter Score is an industry standard question and calculation which allows direct comparison with similar organisations.

NPS	Detractors	Passives	Promoters	NPS score
2022/23	0	38	1133	97
2021/22	13	24	953	95

## Engagement

### Events

44. The Authority successfully delivered three Fire Station 'Spring Open Day' events (Swanscombe, Tenterden and Sheppey), each event selling out of their allocated tickets (through Eventbrite) totalling over 700 bookings. The events had very positive customer feedback regarding the friendliness of our workforce and volunteers; good organisation; and the positive learning children took away from the open days.
45. Employees and volunteers attended Gravesend's Vaisakhi celebrations in April. The event was a big success, which resulted in hundreds of meaningful conversations with a lot of people. It was also the debut for our fire engine wrapped with 'we're her for everyone' messaging to promote the Authority's approach to inclusion, diversity and equality. This received a lot of positive feedback.
46. The organisation has used data to select areas for its 2023 open days and external events. The events will help reach areas where there have been a significant number of incidents and there are higher number of under-represented groups. This will include Chatham, Maidstone, and Folkestone. We will also be attending Pride events, including Canterbury, Margate, Dover, and Medway. This will enable fire safety messages to be effectively promoted to target audiences.

### Internal Communications and Campaigns

47. We are currently reviewing our 'Everyone Together Plan 2021-2025' to ensure we're on track to deliver against objectives and to start planning for focuses beyond 2025. As part of our plan, we have developed new 'Everyone Together' Progress flag pin badges for colleagues, volunteers and Members to wear.
48. The Authority is looking to further improving its internal communication channels to help all colleagues obtain the information they need to carry out their role. A key element of this review is to improve accessibility of communications. The review has involved gathering feedback from managers at fire stations to find out how they access information and how they cascade communications. A trial edition of a magazine aimed specifically at fire stations to improve engagement and promote the "One Team" message will be published later in 2023. An update will be provided at a future Authority meeting.

## Volunteers

49. The January 2023 recruitment campaign successfully recruited 10 new volunteers for three roles – Event Support, Resource Hub Support, and the Volunteer Response Team. This recruitment campaign enables the Authority take on a range of important roles within the organisation, including supporting our teams with tasks, such as research and organising resources, and customer-facing responsibilities. Their invaluable contributions help to ensure we deliver a high-quality service to all of our customers, in a variety of situations and scenarios.

## External Campaigns

50. A new campaign called 'Smoke is No Joke' will launch in July 2023. This will promote closing internal doors to delay the spread of smoke and fire, improving the chance of safe escape, and protecting the home from fire and smoke damage. The campaign is now coming to the end of the creative development stage, having gone through research, co-creation and focus groups with members of the target audience to shape the name, look and feel in line with behaviour change methodology.
51. Work on the next behaviour change campaign will begin this summer. This will focus on encouraging customers to regularly test their smoke alarms. This campaign is set to replace our current 'Test It Tuesday' content, with a focus on using the materials as part of a paid advertising campaign to reach a wider audience.

## E. Freedom of Information Update

*Lead/Contact Officer: Owain Thompson – Head of Policy, Corporate Services*  
01622 692121 ext 8453, [owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org)

52. As part of the Authority's commitment to transparency and good governance, a regular update is brought to Members' attention on the number of Freedom of Information requests received by the Authority along with more detailed information about the way such requests have been processed.
53. A total of 26 Freedom of Information requests have so far been received in 2023/24 (up to and including 18/05/2023).
54. For comparison, for the same date in 2022/23 the Authority had received 23 Freedom of Information requests (out of a total of 193 for that year). All Freedom of Information requests responded to so far in 2023/24 have been dealt with within the statutory limit of 20 working days (starting with the first working day after the request was received).
55. Three data subject access requests have so far been received in 2023/24 (up to and including 18/05/2023). All of those that have been processed have been dealt with within the statutory limit. This is from the day the Authority receives the request, whether it is a working day or not until the corresponding calendar date in the next month. In practice we adopt a rule of 20 working days, including the day the request was received.

56. **Revised Code of Practice for Freedom of Information Requests:** In 2018, the Cabinet Office published a revised Code of Practice for Freedom of Information requests. The Code of Practice provides guidance for public authorities on best practice in meeting their responsibilities under Part 1 (right of access to information) of the Freedom of Information Act. This Code of Practice is designed to be considered alongside the current guidance on best practice published by the Information Commissioner's Office.
57. Section 8 of this Code of Practice covers publication schemes and provides more specific guidance on two areas which supplements the existing guidance published by the Information Commissioner's Office. These are: Compliance Statistics and Senior Executive Pay and Benefits. With Compliance Statistics, the intention is for authorities to provide more detailed information on their performance in handling Freedom of Information requests. Unless otherwise stated, the information should be published on a quarterly basis and include the following:
- The number of requests received during the period;
  - The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed;
  - The number of the received requests that were processed in full (including numbers for those that were met within the statutory deadline, those where the deadline was extended and those where the processing took longer than the statutory deadline);
  - The number of requests where the information was granted in full;
  - The number of requests where the information was refused in full;
  - The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part;
  - The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review (reported annually).
58. The requirement is for this to be reported on a quarterly basis in line with central Government and the Authority is fully compliant with this. The reporting periods are as follows:
- Q1: April to June
  - Q2: July to September
  - Q3: October to December
  - Q4: January to March



59. An update is brought to Members' attention as part of the Information Update Report that forms part of each agenda for the Authority. **Table 1** presents the current update for 2023/24 and **Table 2** presents the end of year update for 2022/23:

**Table 1: Reporting against the revised Code of Practice 2022/23**

	2023/24				
	Q1*	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
The number of requests received during the period	26				<b>26</b>
The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed	13				<b>13</b>
The number of the received requests that were processed in full	13				<b>13</b>
The number of requests where the information was granted in full	8				<b>8</b>
The number of requests where the information was refused in full	0				<b>0</b>
The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part	5				<b>5</b>
The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review	0				<b>0</b>
Number of data subject access requests**	3				<b>3</b>

\* Q1 is currently incomplete as it covers the period from 01/04/2023 to 18/05/2023

\*\*Although this is not a requirement in the Code, it is reported to Members.

**Table 2: End of year update against the revised Code of Practice 2022/23**

	2022/23				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
The number of requests received during the period	43	64	36	50	<b>193</b>

The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
The number of the received requests that were processed in full	43	64	36	50	<b>193</b>
The number of requests where the information was granted in full	31	49	25	37	<b>142</b>
The number of requests where the information was refused in full	1	4	0	3	<b>8</b>
The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part	11	11	11	8	<b>43</b>
The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Number of data subject access requests**	3	2	6	1	<b>12</b>

#### **F. Pensions and Pensions Board Update**

*Lead/Contact Officer: Mark Rist - Director, Response and Resilience (Chair of the Pension Board) 01622 692121 ext. 8959, [mark.rist@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:mark.rist@kent.fire-uk.org)*

60. Members will recall that, in accordance with the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the Authority established a Pension Board in relation to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes comprising representatives of both the employer and employees. To ensure that Members are kept informed of the issues discussed and can be reassured that the Authority is complying with its duties under the Act, Minutes of the Pension Board meetings are routinely reported to the Authority. Accordingly, the Minutes of the last meeting of the Authority's Pension Board are attached at **Appendix 2** for Members' information.

#### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

61. There are no cost implications arising directly from this report.

#### **CONCLUSION**

62. Members are requested to:

- 62.1 Consider and note the contents of the report.

## **PERFORMANCE OUT-TURN 2022/23**

### **SUMMARY**

This report details how the Authority has performed over the last financial year and over the medium term period of 2021-24. Performance is considered against targets and alongside how it compares nationally and with the CIPFA Nearest Neighbour Group, where possible. Annual targets are included elsewhere on this agenda.

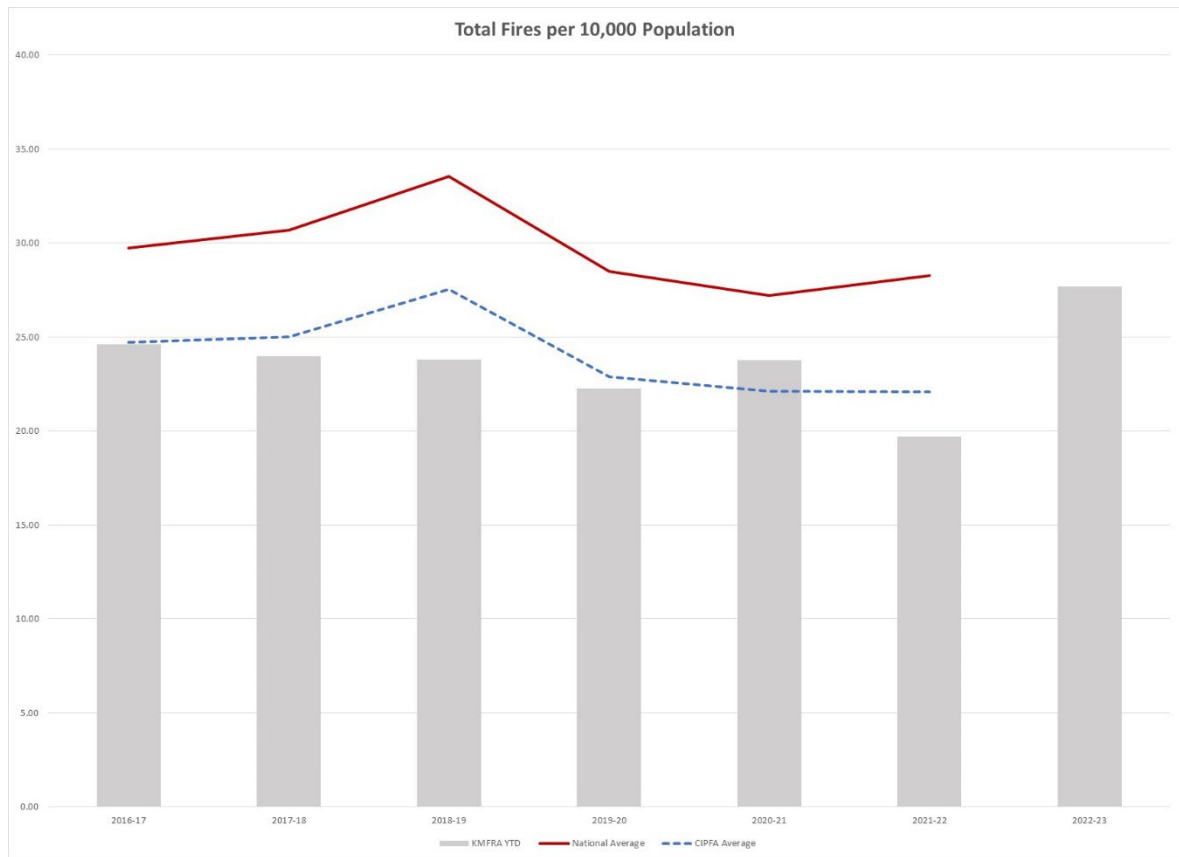
### **COMMENTS**

#### **Performance 2022/23**

1. The medium term reporting period began on 01 April 2021. This paper reports performance against the targets for the three year period and make comparisons, where possible, to how we compare nationally with other fire services.
2. At the time of writing this report, data for the 2022/23 financial year has not been published by the Home Office. Any comparable information shown for how services are performing nationally are only available up to 2021/22.

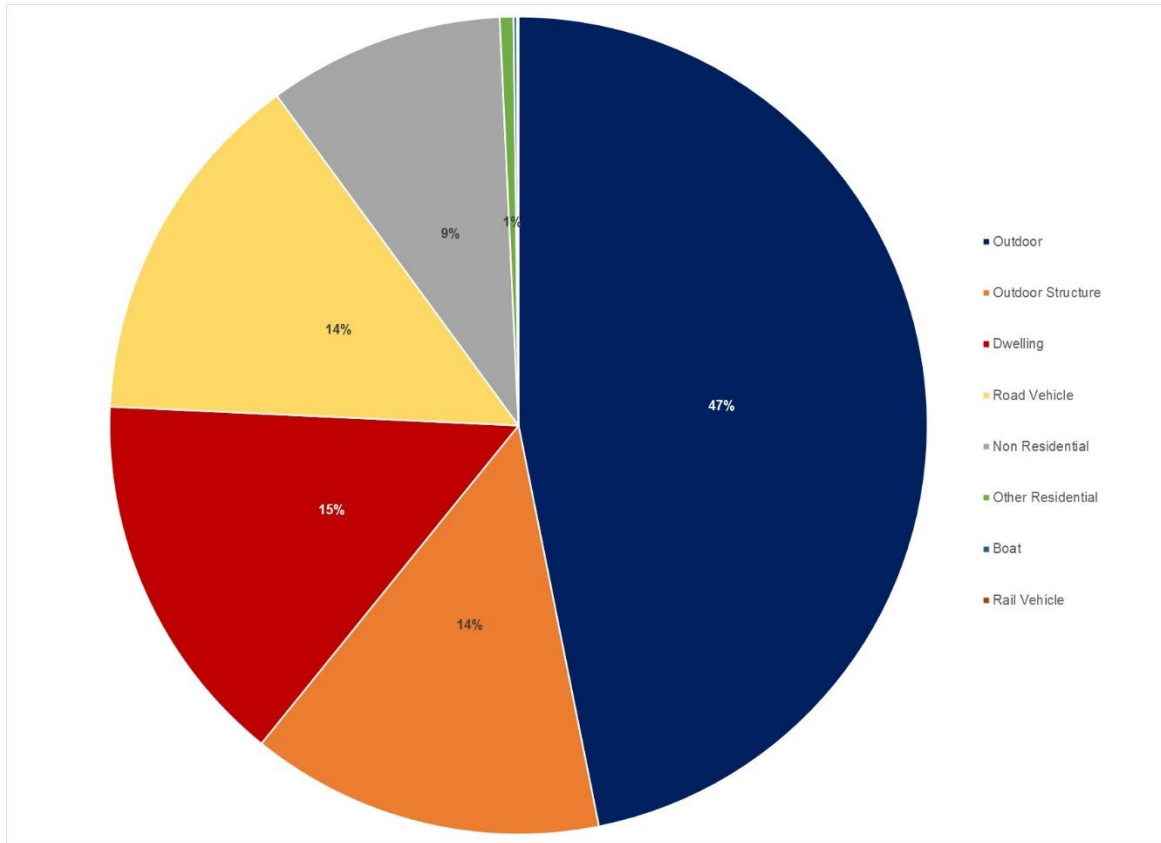
#### **Total Fires**

3. The Authority attended 5,176 fires in 2022/23 which is higher than the number reported in 2021/22 and previous years. The three-year average outturn for the 2021-24 period is 4,429 fires, which is higher than the target of 4,210.
4. The higher level of fire activity experienced in 2022/23 can be mostly attributed to a higher number of outdoor fires. These types of fires are always much higher through a warm dry summer and the summer months of 2022 were exceptional; the heatwave in 2022 saw the number of fires in July and August double in comparison to the previous three-year average. For comparison there were 2,425 outdoor fires attended in 2022 which was considerably higher than the 1,332 attended in 2021.



5. The table and chart below detail the number of fires last year split into the different types. Members will recognise that the number of outdoor fires (rubbish and grassland) is very high for the summer months.

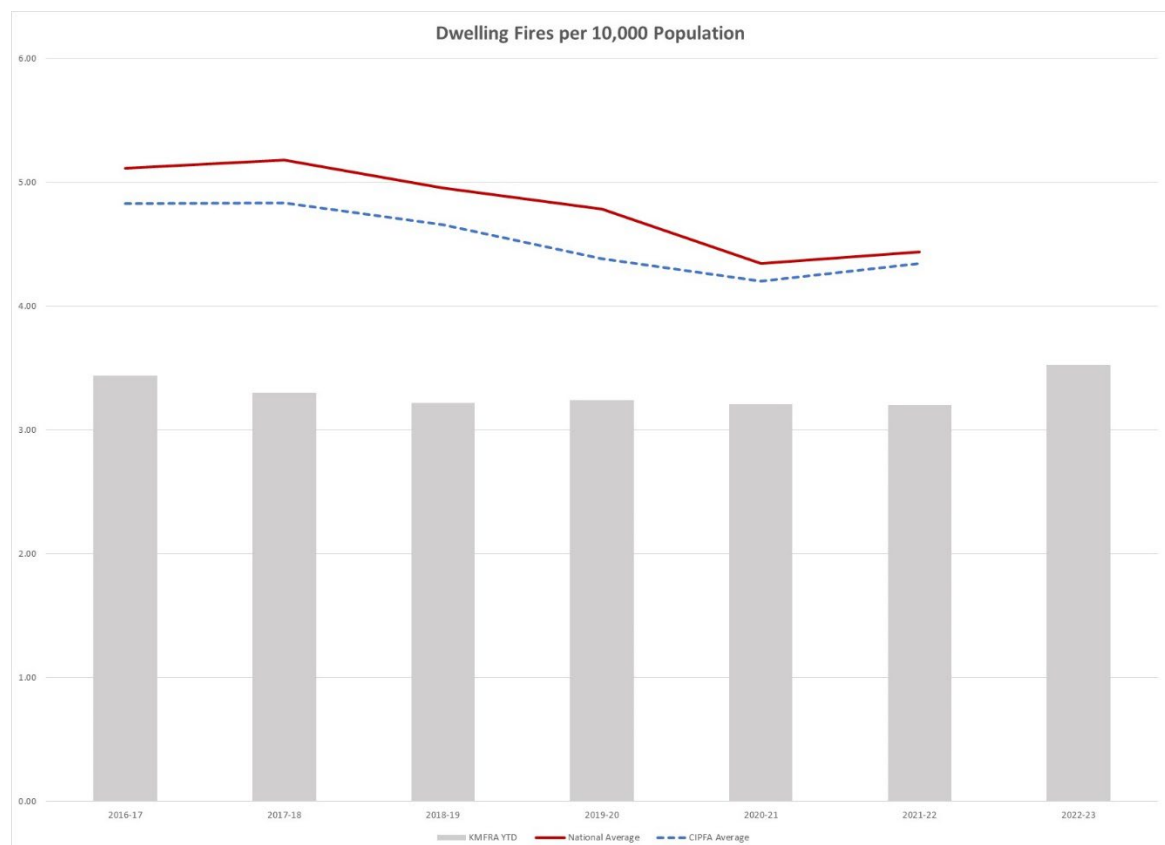
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Outdoor	230	198	244	551	580	171	101	57	36	54	122	81
Outdoor Structure	78	73	68	132	90	51	50	27	27	28	54	45
Dwelling	73	61	71	65	50	49	41	62	86	80	65	69
Road Vehicle	59	66	62	71	88	65	51	49	67	60	52	45
Non Residential	53	49	48	63	59	32	26	32	24	29	32	36
Other Residential	1	0	2	4	2	1	7	1	0	2	6	2
Boat	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0
Rail Vehicle	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0



### Dwelling Fires

6. In recent years the Authority has reported the lowest ever number of accidental fires in the home, however this trend has not continued over the last year. In 2022/23 592 incidents were attended which is higher than the levels seen in the previous year (524) and higher than the number attended in both 2018/19 and 2019/20. The last time we reported numbers in this region was 2015. The numbers involved are relatively small but the increase is still significant. However, taking into consideration the months of June and July having the highest number of incidents reported, these can also be linked to the weather and a large amount of those were caused by outdoor fires spreading to properties. The three-year average performance for the medium term period (2021-24) was 553 which is 3.8% higher than the target of 532.
7. Unfortunately accessing comparable information for fire services that fit this Authority's local performance indicator definitions is difficult. It is not possible to obtain accidental fires in the home detailed by individual authorities nor is it possible to obtain the number of dwellings in each Authority area. For the purposes of benchmarking ourselves against others we can compare all fires in the home, which although that will include those started deliberately the numbers are relatively small in comparison to those started accidentally. To ensure the number of incidents is more representative of the size of the community that is served we have used population as the denominator.

8. The chart below shows that the Authority has consistently performed well in this area (consistently amongst the top performers nationally for more than 10 consecutive years), and that the previous decline in incidents is not a trend that has only been experienced by Kent; it is reflected both nationally and with CIPFA.
9. Members will notice that whilst the trend is the same, this Authority is experiencing fewer fires in the home per 10,000 population than both the national average and the CIPFA average, even taking into account the higher numbers experienced last year. The published data for 2021/2022, the latest available information, details that Kent ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> for the number of fires in the home per 10,000 population out of 45 services
10. The causes of fires in the home rarely change, with cooking relating incidents accounting for 39.5% of all the incidents over the last three years and a further 15% being attributed to electrical appliances



### Fatalities and Casualties in Accidental Fires

11. Accidental fires accounted for 61% of the total fires attended last year and, as a result of these fires, four people died and 80 people suffered fire related injuries. There were also two serious injuries and 21 slight injuries reported as a result of deliberate fires.
12. The table below details the status of recorded casualties in accidental fires over the last three financial years. Members will notice that the overall numbers of casualties

has increased slightly in the last year, which given the increase in fire activity is to be expected. It should be noted though, whilst the numbers are very low, there were half the number of fatalities last year compared to the previous year, and there has also been a reduction in reported serious injuries.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Fatal	7	8	4	19
Serious injury	21	15	10	46
Slight injury	59	55	70	184
First aid given at scene	69	56	72	197
Precautionary check	42	46	60	148
Total	198	180	216	594

Note: Only fire related injuries and deaths are included in these figures.

### **Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)**

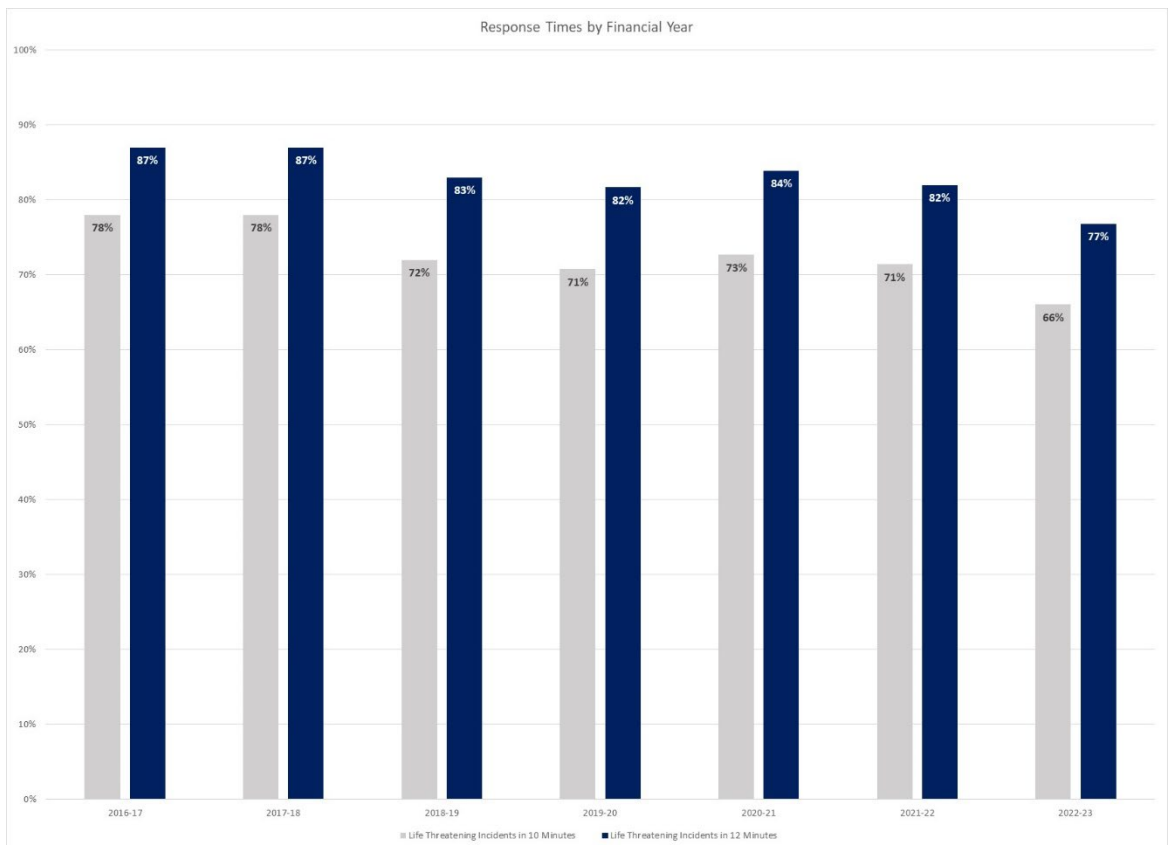
13. The Authority attended 1,057 road traffic collisions last year which is fractionally more than in 2021/22 (1,043). As a result of these incidents 25 people have died and 125 have been seriously injured.

### **Other Emergency Special Service Incidents**

14. The Authority continue to provide emergency medical response in support of SECamb. During 2022/23, 2,266 incidents were responded to and 2,040 were attended. On 269 occasions the Authority's resources were stood down before they arrived.
15. The majority of these incidents were attended by a crew in a fire engine, however we do have officers responding in cars which accounted for 642 of the incidents (31%).
16. Over the last financial year the Authority has responded to assist other agencies, for example to lift a person or assist in the search for a missing person, 1,712 times. In addition to these crews have also responded to 1,588 incidents to gain entry to a property for either the occupier or for our emergency services colleagues.

### **Response Times**

17. Last year 66% of life-threatening incidents were reached within 10 minutes and 77% within 12 minutes. Overall performance is lower than the targets set for these indicators. Members will recall that the targets for these indicators were changed for the 2020/21 financial year to 71% and 82% respectively
18. Performance against response time targets has declined in recent years, and there are multiple factors affecting the outcomes. Detailed analysis is currently being undertaken to highlight where improvements can be made and will be factored into the Community Risk Management Plan process. Further updates will be available in the coming months.
19. The Authority attended life-threatening fire incidents within 10 minutes on 68.3% occasions whilst life-threatening road traffic collisions were reached within 10 minutes on 58.6% of occasions. Non-life threatening incidents were attended within 15 minutes on 88% of occasions.





## Availability

20. In 2022/23, the Authority aimed to have a minimum of 32 with an aspiration of 44 fire engines available day and night across Kent and Medway. The number of fire engines available is heavily influenced by the availability of on-call firefighters and can therefore fluctuate over a 24 hour period. The table below details the average number of fire engines available during the day (9am-6pm) and in the evening (6pm to 9am). Of the number available, 26 of these are full-time fire engines and the remainder on-call.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Day	44	32	32
Night	57	48	46

## Customer and Business Safety

21. During 2022/23, the Authority's Customer Safety teams delivered 11,228 Safe and Well Visits to customers across the County. In addition to these visits on-duty crews and the taskforce completed 7,588 Home Fire Safety Visits through the year.
22. Between April 2022 and March 2023 Building Safety teams completed 1,089 audits of premises in the County in line with the risk based inspection programme.
23. The level of building consultations received by the Authority increased in 2022/23 when compared to the previous year (1,937) to 2,377.

## Corporate Health

24. During 2022/23, 4.9% of all contracted hours have been lost due to sickness which is slightly higher than 2021/22 (4.5%). Operational staff lost 5.6% of contracted hours to sickness and corporate teams' staff lost 3.3%.
25. RIDDOR-reportable injuries are those that the Authority is required to report to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. 15 RIDDOR-reportable injuries were recorded in 2022/23.

*This page has been left blank*

**MINUTES OF PENSION BOARD MEETING  
15 FEBRUARY 2023**

**Present:**

Mark Rist (MR)	KFRS (Employer Representative)
Danny Barrett (DB)	FBU (Employee Representative)
David Broughton (DBr)	FBU (Deputy Employee Representative)
Lawrence Pater (LP)	FOA (Employee Representative)
Lee Abel (LA)	FOA (Deputy Employee Representative)
Jordan McEvoy (JM)	FRSA Representative (Deputy Employee Representative)
Alison Kilpatrick (AK)	Director Finance and Corporate Services
David Stanbury (DS)	Pensions Manager (Scheme Manager Representative)
Marie Curry (MC)	Business Support Manager/Clerk to the Authority

**Apologies:**

Matthew Deadman (MD)	KFRS (Employer Representative)
Dylan McEvoy (DM)	FRSA Representative (Employee Representative)
Barrie Fullbrook (BF)	Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions

<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	Date: 14 June 2023
	Venue: MS Teams
	Time: 14:00

## 1. **Membership of the Pension Board 2023**

Agreed as follows:

Mark Rist (Chair)	KFRS (Employer Representative)
Matt Deadman (Vice Chair)	KFRS (Employer Representative)
Danny Barrett	FBU (Employee Representative)
David Broughton	FBU (Deputy Employee Representative)
Lawrence Pater	FOA (Employee Representative)
Lee Abel	FOA (Deputy Employee Representative)
Dylan McEvoy	FRSA (Employee Representative)
Jordan McEvoy	FRSA (Deputy Employee Representative)
Alison Kilpatrick	Director Finance and Corporate Service
Barrie Fullbrook	Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions
David Stanbury	Pensions Manager (Scheme Manager Representative)
Marie Curry	Clerk to the Authority

## 2. **Declarations of Interests on Items on this Agenda**

MR said that he has been frustrated with the way in which Local Pensions Partnership (LPP) has handled his query over his Annual Benefit Statement (ABS). He added that as the Board regularly looks over performance data of LPP and provides feedback, he wanted to declare this at the start of the meeting.

## 3. **Minutes of the Pension Board Meeting held on 19 October 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2022 were agreed as a true record.

## 4. **Pension Board Action Log - Update on Progress**

DS ran through the outstanding actions on the log. The action log can be view by Board Member on the Pension Board SharePoint area.

## 5. **Local Pension Partnership (scheme administrators) Quarterly Report**

DS ran through the key areas on the latest LPP report. This included LPP's satisfaction scores which have dropped in percentage terms over the last quarter. DS added that monthly meetings do take place with LPP to review performance as well as a variety of issues that have been raised from members internally or as a result of discussions at Pension Board.

AK said that she feels the detail in the LPP quarterly reports are not reflective of all the issues that are being raised to them. She added that a lot of issues are raised by Officers as a result of one-to-one discussions that are taking place with colleagues. In these reports the performance figures look fairly rosy but I am sure that LPP are not getting many direct queries, its mainly

through us. AK said that she would like the report to be broadened to take into consideration all issues raised which include those by Officers. AK added that she would also like to see figures on how many ABSs have been issued as its been a bit hit and miss with some colleagues receiving theirs and others not. The fault this time appears to be that LPP had a technical issue with their system which prevented all of the ABSs being issued. Things of this nature should also be monitored through the performance report. DS said that LPP have recently undergone a restructure and as a result we have a new Contracts Manager. Interactions so far have been positive, and they are keen to make improvements so will certainly be feeding back the drop in SLA.

LP asked how many other authorities use LPP to which DS responded by saying 15. DS said that we have not spoken to any other authorities as yet to see what issues they are facing, at the moment we are trying to resolve issues directly ourselves with LPP but reconfirmed what AK said that the monthly reports do seem to cherry pick the best data which needs to be addressed.

AK said it is clear that we are one of a number of authorities that LPP are supporting, however as far as she is aware we are the only authority doing Immediate Detriment (ID) so accepts this does add extra complications and a completely new process for LPP to follow. She added that LPP do not have many people with the in-depth knowledge or expertise to cover all the issues so hence why they are having to train people, just adding another layer of complication into the mix. ID is a complex area.

## **6. Update on Cases (Standing Item)**

DS gave an update on the following:

### McCloud vs Sargent Case

The data collection exercise that LPP have asked us to do is still ongoing. This will eventually help LPP to rebuild the legacy scheme records so for the members that transitioned. This work is 70% done so making good progress. The deadline to complete is the end of March 2023. We now have additional resources within Payroll to get the work over the line. DS said that he has fortnightly meetings with the Payroll team to make sure we are keeping on track.

### Matthews/O'Brien Case

DS said that since the communication has gone out informing that a second options exercise will be undertaken and what the criteria is, he has received numerous queries. At the moment these queries are being logged, along with contact details so that when the regulations finally do come out, we can then get in touch again with individuals to discuss options.

DB asked what a member would need to do under the criteria to prove that they had pensionable service in a retained role. He added that he has received quite a few queries from people who are looking to retire soon and as they joined back in the day as retained, they may have a pension coming as part of this case. Do you have any update on timings for this to be resolved?

DS said if individuals make contact with him then a check can be done on their records and if the

detail is there then we will have the information required. If records can't be found, then individuals will need to prove their start date and they were employed by the Service.

AK said that because the regulations will probably affect individuals that could claim a pension back to when they started, which could be quite some considerable time then there is the acceptance nationally that lots of this detail won't be available as individuals will have not kept records. This authority certainly won't as we are not required by law to keep personal records that long. In this case we would apply the default method unless you can prove otherwise but until more information is provided to us, we don't know what that default is yet. At this stage for us it is still about information gathering.

### IDRP Cases Update

There has been one IDRP case since the last time the Board met in relation to a widow's pension but that has now been resolved.

## **7. Dashboard**

DS said that the Pension Dashboard will now be a regular item on this agenda. DS has been working with LPP to get this set up so essentially the Dashboard is a 'one stop shop of data' which will enable Members to log in and see everything relating to their pension benefits in one place rather than having to search out various places. This is probably going to be more beneficial to those members who have more than one pension so for instance if individuals log in and update information, in theory it will notify all pension schemes. This work is on-going so DS will provide updates to the Board where necessary.

## **8. Pension Administration**

DS said as mentioned previously he holds regularly meetings with the LPP administration team just to keep on top of issues. One big issue that has recently occurred and we have touched on this already is the issuing of the ABSs. DS said that he is going to have a discussion with LPP to come up with an alternative way of issuing these rather than having to rely on their system, effectively a Plan B if it all went wrong. Hopefully we will get to a place of improvement. DS asked DB to feedback any issues members are reporting around this or any other regular issues so this can be brought to LPP's attention.

DB said that a lot of members are asking about ID so some individuals have left the Service under ill-health and didn't get ID as it wasn't offered at the time. Where are we with regards to ensuring these people are picked up as part of the process? DS said that we are now processing some category 2 cases and have given LPP a list of all the members that potentially fall within this bracket and have left within the last 12 months. LPP are now running through that list and doing their checks, again there still could be the potential for tax issues from this but we are keeping members in the loop with developments. AK added that the tax laws are not in place yet so we would need to wait until there is some clarity around this before any recalculation of figures can happen and this is not going to happen before October 2023. The

Local Government Association has put some guidance together with their suggestion in which order you could process the claims in terms of prioritisation but there is a massive backlog so it will all need to be processed in some sort of order. We will put comms out, once the process has been agreed with LPP, to manage expectations as not every claim could be addressed in October, it would be impossible to do this. You will then also have the 'normal leavers' beyond October 2023 who will be calculated under the new regulations. In effect we are going to have to deal with the new claims and the retrospective ones potentially going back to April 2015.

DB wanted to put on record the FBUs thanks for everything Officers are doing in terms of processing Category 1 and 2 claims and trying to make the process as pain free as possible. It is greatly appreciated as the Service is doing above and beyond compared to what other authorities are doing.

## **9. AOB**

No items for AOB

*This page has been left blank*



By: Chief Executive  
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 29 June 2023  
Subject: OPERATIONAL INCIDENTS OF INTEREST PRESENTATION  
Classification: Unrestricted

**FOR INFORMATION**

**SUMMARY**

As part of the meeting, a presentation will be given to Members on some noteworthy operational incidents due to factors such as: the firefighting and rescue techniques employed; the equipment and resources used; customer care and joint working; and what was learnt as a result of the incident.

