



**Kent** Fire &  
Rescue Service

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## Towards 2020

Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013-20

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Detailed Outcomes of Consultation

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## Contents

Contents .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Methodology .....	4
Raising awareness of the consultation.....	4
Methods of consultation.....	4
Overview of respondents .....	6
Pattern of response .....	6
Overview of public respondents.....	8
Overview of staff respondents .....	8
Overview of business respondents .....	10
Overview of stakeholder or community group respondents.....	10
Overview of responses from Accredited Representatives .....	11
Letters and emails .....	12
Results and Interpretation .....	13
Section 1: General comments .....	13
Section 2: Developing our plans for the future.....	13
Focus on you.....	13
Focus on business.....	18
Focus on resilience.....	20
Focus on the environment .....	23
Focus on staff.....	25
Section 3: The plain English test .....	28
Conclusions .....	30

## Introduction

1. This report describes the outcomes of consultation on Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority's ("the Authority") Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013-20 ("the Plan"). This year the Plan focused on the development of the five new primary strategies for the Authority, covering community safety, business safety, resilience, protecting the environment and developing the workforce. The Plan also contained information on how the Authority was developing its budget for the coming financial year, although the outcomes of this element are reported elsewhere on this agenda.
2. Consultation on this year's Plan was open from 29 October 2012 to 14 January 2013. In order to help respondents give their views, text from the Plan was extracted and presented in a questionnaire alongside questions or attitudinal statements that were developed for each part of the Plan.
3. Copies of the Plan were sent to:
  - The Authority's key stakeholders (e.g. police, ambulance, other local authorities in Kent and Medway);
  - Each fire and rescue authority in England, Wales and Scotland;
  - All parish councils in Kent and Medway and the Kent Association of Local Councils;
  - Members of the public and businesses who previously responded to consultation or contacted us to request a copy;
  - The Authority's Accredited Representatives.
4. A link to the location of the Plan and questionnaire on the Authority's website was emailed to potential respondents wherever possible to reduce paper usage.
5. As successfully pioneered last year, all the detailed supporting information was published on the website at the same time as the Plan was launched, allowing respondents to see the underpinning research used in developing the proposals contained in the Plan. This gave complete transparency in terms of how the proposals were formulated, by providing the full background data for anyone who wanted to look at the proposals in more depth than set out in the more simple main report. The survey was broken down into strategy-specific sections, so that anyone wanting to comment on only one element of the Plan could do so.

## Methodology

### Raising Awareness of the Consultation

6. The consultation period was advertised in a number of places. These included:
  - (a) a summary video of the Plan being made available on the Authority's website;
  - (b) media coverage on BBC and ITV news, local radio stations, Kent Online and local newspapers;
  - (c) a series of press releases sent to all media in the county to announce the proposals and to give details of how the public could have their say;
  - (d) use of the Authority's website and reminders sent out on social media sites to promote the consultation;
  - (e) information about the consultation being included in other email newsletters and websites e.g. the countywide neighbourhood watch newsletter and the *ewatch* website which has 30,000 readers and 10,000 subscribers; and
  - (f) an e-mail flyer to 15,000 businesses and public sector organisations across Kent and Medway who had been approached about automatic fire alarms (AFAs) in 2011.
7. No requests for briefings on the Plan were made by parish or town councils, although if a visit was being undertaken for another purpose, then the opportunity to raise the consultation period was taken. An example of this is attendance by senior officers at a recent meeting of Whitstable Town Council.

### Methods of Consultation

#### Questionnaires

8. As in previous years, questionnaires provided the central mechanism for most people to get involved. Separate questionnaires were produced for staff, members of the public, community group/stakeholders, and businesses. No specific questions were created for young people this year, as agreed by Members in October 2012 when the Plan was approved for publication. Each questionnaire outlined the proposals and asked questions relevant to the respondent group, although some common elements between the questionnaires did exist. The questionnaire contained two main types of questions: attitudinal statements where respondents were asked to select an answer that most reflected their view, and questions where free text answers could be given.
9. As in previous years, there were few requests for paper copies of the Plan or questionnaire from Members of the public. Staff were not sent a personal printed copy of the Plan. A paper copy was available on request. No requests were made for paper copies of the Plan or the questionnaire from staff.

#### Social Networking Sites and the Website

10. The Authority promoted the consultation period on the social networking site Facebook between 29 October and 1 December. It was also promoted via the Authority's Twitter feed.
11. 5,000 people clicked the link within Facebook whilst it was being promoted, and this resulted in 2,042 people watching the video based on the Plan which was made

available on the Authority's website. Audience retention drops off quite sharply after about three minutes, which suggests that breaking up the information into smaller chunks would be worthwhile if this method is used in the future.

12. Since December, 1,039 people have independently navigated to the landing page for the Plan on the Authority's website.

#### **Consultation with Accredited Representatives**

13. All Accredited Representatives received a copy of the Plan and all the supporting information. Representatives from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) were also given a briefing on the content of the Plan.

#### **Member briefings**

14. A number of briefing sessions for Members of the Authority were held as the Plan was being developed, and subsequently to gain further views as part of the consultation process. The outcomes of these sessions have been shared with the authors of the five primary strategies, and some of the suggestions and comments are reflected in this report.

## Overview of Respondents

15. A breakdown of responses is shown in **Table 1**. A comparison of questionnaire responses with previous years has also been provided in **Table 2**. Compared to 2012, there were fewer responses across all respondent groups except staff.

**Table 1: Total Number of Consultation Responses received by the Authority**

	Questionnaires received via the website	Comments... received by letter or email	Total
Staff	228	0	228
Public	102	1	103
Business	2	0	2
Stakeholder/Community Group	15	4	18
Young people	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>352</b>

**Table 2: Total Number of Completed Questionnaire Responses compared with Previous Years**

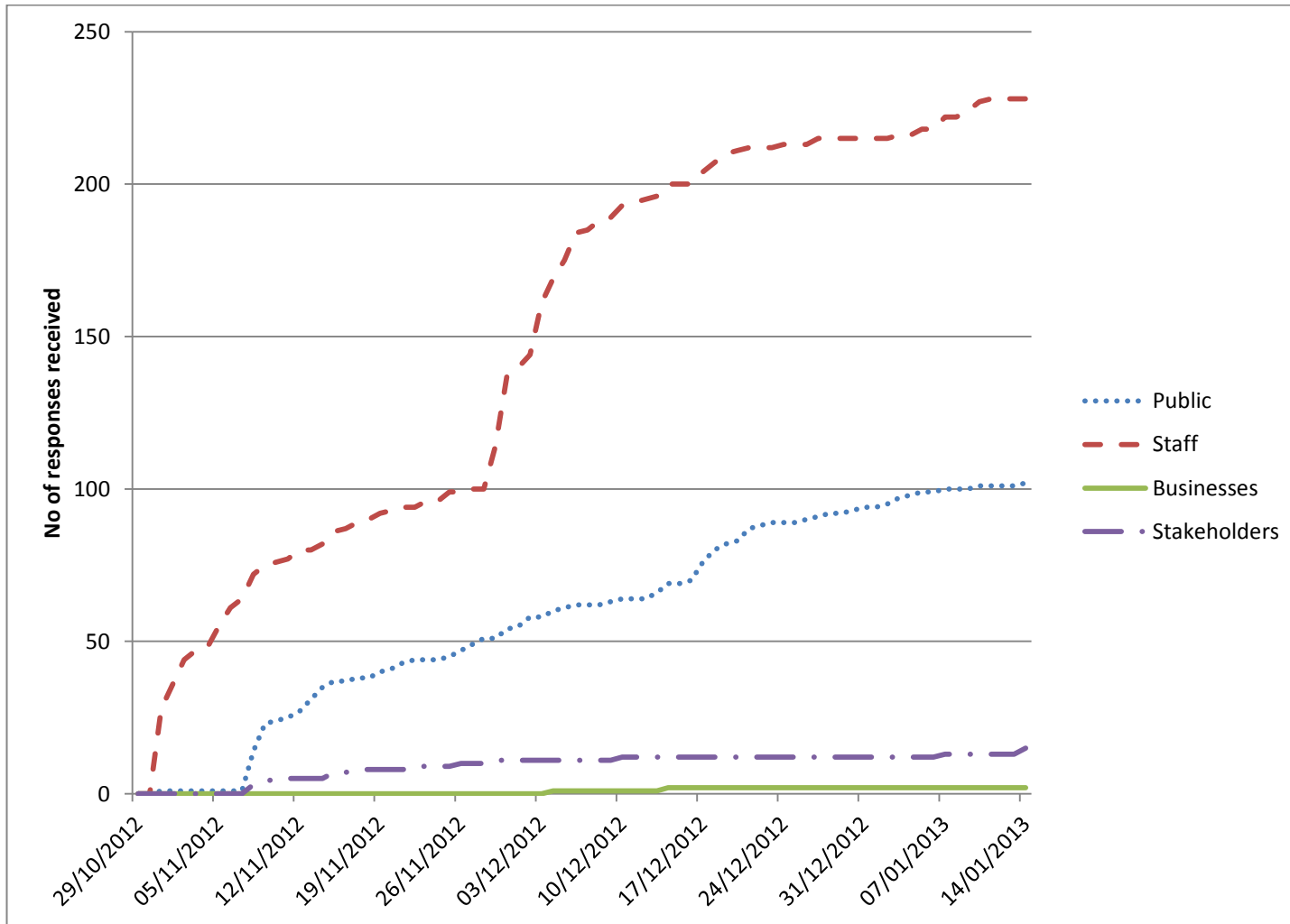
	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Staff	228	225	410	500	211	461	255	331	341	115
Public	102	291	1,217	643	74	390	147	97	123	138
Business	2	13	58	29	7	30	61	119	130	123
Stakeholder/Community Group	14	45	12	26	45	39	55	39	20	32
Young people	-	223	325	560	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>2,022</b>	<b>1,778</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>408</b>

### Pattern of Response

16. An analysis has been made of the pattern of response throughout the consultation period (**Graph 1**). This shows that the numbers of questionnaires being completed tails off significantly towards Christmas and the new year across all respondent types. For staff, it is possible to see where additional communication is issued (1 December), as this results in a spike in the number of responses being made.

17. Most members of the public who answered the question “How did you hear about the Plan” responded that they had been contacted directly by the Authority as a previous respondent (68.3%).

**Graph 1: Pattern of Questionnaire Responses received**



## Overview of Public Respondents

18. Members of the public who completed the questionnaire were asked a selection of questions designed to build a profile of respondents. 94.4% of respondents who chose to state their ethnicity selected 'White British', which is a higher proportion than in the general population of Kent and Medway. The only other categories selected were 'Any other White' (2.8%), 'White Irish' (1.4%) and 'Any Other Mixed' (1.4%).
19. 72 people completing the questionnaire chose to indicate their age. The highest percentage of respondents were aged 65 years and over (33.8%) followed by 35 to 44 years (21.6%), and 55 to 64 years (18.9%). Responses were received from each age group except under-18s.
20. 68.9% of respondents who chose to state their gender selected male and 31.1% selected female. 9.6% of people completing the questionnaire stated that they had a disability. 67 respondents indicated their sexuality from a selection of options. 97% selected 'heterosexual/straight', 1.5% 'gay man', and 0% 'gay woman/ lesbian'. 1.5% of respondents answering this question selected 'other'.
21. 66.1% of respondents who chose to state their religion selected 'Christian' which is representative of the population of Kent and Medway based on the last census. 33.9% selected 'no religion'. No other religions were selected.
22. In general terms, it would appear that male respondents over the age of 45 are over-represented generally and young adults are under-represented. Due to the low numbers of respondents it is not possible to identify any differences in responses to individual questions based on the characteristics identified.

## Overview of Staff Respondents

23. All staff responding to consultation were asked to state their permanent work location. As in previous years, the highest percentage of responses came from staff based at Service Headquarters. Results suggest that responses were not received from 18 locations. **Table 3** below shows where responses came from.



**Table 3: Primary Work Locations of Staff who Responded by Questionnaire**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Answer Options	Response Percent
Service Headquarters	25.6%	48 Sheppey	3.1%
Fire and Police Control Centre	4.0%	49 Eastchurch	0.4%
Training Centre	7.0%	60 Maidstone	4.4%
East Kent Group Headquarters	0.9%	62 Lenham	0.0%
Mid Kent Group Headquarters	3.1%	63 Headcorn	0.4%
North Kent Group Headquarters	1.3%	64 Marden	1.8%
South Kent Group Headquarters	0.4%	65 Larkfield	0.4%
West Kent Group Headquarters	2.6%	66 Emergency Response Centre	2.2%
11 Ashford	1.8%	67 Borough Green	0.4%
12 Chilham	0.0%	68 Sevenoaks	0.9%
13 Wye	0.4%	69 Westerham	0.0%
14 Charing	0.0%	70 Edenbridge	0.4%
15 Aldington	0.0%	72 Tonbridge	1.3%
16 Dover	4.4%	73 Paddock Wood	0.4%
18 Whitfield	0.4%	74 Tunbridge Wells	0.4%
19 Folkestone	2.6%	76 Southborough	0.4%
20 New Romney	0.0%	80 Canterbury	2.2%
21 Hythe	0.4%	81 Aylesham	0.0%
22 Dymchurch	0.4%	83 Wingham	0.4%
23 Lydd	0.0%	84 Faversham	1.8%
24 Cranbrook	0.4%	85 Whitstable	2.2%
25 Hawkhurst	0.0%	86 Herne Bay	0.9%
26 Tenterden	0.4%	87 Margate	1.3%
30 Dartford	0.9%	88 Westgate	0.0%
31 Swanley	0.0%	90 Ramsgate	1.8%
32 Horton Kirby	0.0%	91 Deal	1.8%
33 Swanscombe	0.0%	92 Eastry	0.0%
35 Thames-side	1.3%	93 Sandwich	0.0%
36 Cliffe	0.0%	Fire Safety - Folkestone Group	1.8%
37 Hoo	0.0%	Fire Safety - Maidstone Group	1.8%
38 Grain	0.4%	Fire Safety - Tonbridge Group	1.3%
39 Strood	0.4%	Fire Safety - Dartford Group	0.0%
43 Medway	1.8%	<i>skipped question</i>	0.6%
44 Rainham	0.4%		
45 Sittingbourne	2.6%		
46 Teynham	1.3%		

24. The highest proportion of respondents were service support staff (26.9%), followed by firefighters (25.1%). **Table 4** shows a breakdown of staff responses by role.

**Table 4: Role of Staff who Responded by Questionnaire**

Answer Options	Response Percent
Service Support	26.9%
Firefighter	25.1%
Watch Manager	20.3%
Station Manager	11.0%
Crew Manager	10.1%
Area Manager or above	3.1%
Group Manager	2.2%
Member of Control	1.3%

25. All supervisory managers<sup>1</sup> and their Green Book<sup>2</sup> equivalents were invited to attend a series of conferences on the development of the Plan. These were held on:

- Friday 5 October - Ashford
- Tuesday 16 October - Ashford
- Wednesday 24 October – Service Headquarters
- Thursday 25 October - Sittingbourne
- Wednesday 7 November - Sevenoaks
- Friday 7 December – Ashford.

26. Outcomes from these events followed a very similar pattern to the comments made via the questionnaires.

### Overview of Business Respondents

27. The level of response from businesses has been very disappointing. No attempt has been made to analyse the results from this questionnaire as they would not be representative.

### Overview of Stakeholder or Community Group Respondents

28. One email was received from parish or town councils, and this came from Sandwich Town Council. No letters or emails from Members of Parliament were received, nor from district or upper-tier local authorities in Kent and Medway. A total of fourteen stakeholders or community groups completed a questionnaire as shown in **Table 5** below.

<sup>1</sup> Supervisory managers are Watch Managers on stations, and some Station Managers at other locations.

<sup>2</sup> Green Book managers between salary grades five to eight.

**Table 5: Analysis of Responses from Stakeholders or Community Groups**

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Stakeholder type</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>Alzheimer's Society</b>	Community group	Questionnaire
<b>Ash Parish Council</b>	Parish/Town Council	Questionnaire
<b>Capel-le-Ferne Parish Council</b>	Parish/Town Council	Questionnaire
<b>CASE Kent</b>	Community group	Questionnaire
<b>Chilham Parish Council</b>	Parish/Town Council	Questionnaire
<b>Dartford Borough Council, Sutton-at-Hone &amp; Hawley Parish Council</b>	Parish/Town Council & Local Authority	Questionnaire
<b>Dymchurch Parish Council</b>	Parish/Town Council	Questionnaire
<b>EKH -Thanet Area Board Member</b>	Local Authority	Questionnaire
<b>Fire Brigades' Union</b>	Accredited representative	Letter
<b>Kent County Council</b>	Local Authority	Questionnaire
<b>Maidstone Mind</b>	Community group	Questionnaire
<b>Newington Parish Council</b>	Parish/Town Council	Questionnaire
<b>Parents is the word</b>	Community group	Questionnaire
<b>Staplehurst Parish Council</b>	Parish/Town Council	Questionnaire
<b>Sturry Parish Council</b>	Parish/Town Council	Questionnaire
<b>Merseyside Fire &amp; Rescue Service</b>	Local Authority	Letter
<b>Sandwich Town Council</b>	Parish/Town Council	Email
<b>West Malling Parish Council</b>	Parish/Town Council	Letter

## Overview of Responses from Accredited Representatives

29. A formal response from the FBU has been received and comments have been incorporated into this report. Overall it was broadly supportive, with no major issues raised. They did request further briefings as the strategies are developed further, which can be accommodated.

30. No formal response has been received from other Accredited Representatives.

### Letters and emails

31. The Authority received very few letters and emails in response to the consultation.

Comments received in any letters or emails have been incorporated into this report. In total two emails and two letters were received between 29 October and 14 January, as shown in **Table 6** below. Any correspondence received outside of this timeframe was logged but has not been used in preparing this report.

**Table 6: Letters and emails received about Proposals in the Plan**

Row Labels	Email	Letter	Grand Total
<b>Public</b>	1	-	1
<b>Stakeholder</b>	1	3	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	2	3	5

## Results and Interpretation

32. The results and interpretation selection matches the overall structure of the Plan. Comments made have been analysed and the main themes are incorporated into each section.

### Section 1: General Comments

33. At the seminars for Watch and Station Managers, it was noted that the term “Integrated Risk Management Plan” was not in itself very public-friendly. Views were sought on what it should be called instead. “Safety Plan”, “Annual Safety Plan” and “Making Kent Safer” were suggested. Of these, “Safety Plan” is thought to be the best, as current government guidance suggests that an annual Integrated Risk Management Plan is not always required.
34. In a joint questionnaire response from Dartford Borough Council and Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley Parish Council, they noted their continued opposition to the closure of Horton Kirby Fire Station.

### Section 2: Developing our Plans for the Future

#### Focus on You

35. The Plan gave an overview of the new strategy for community safety. Community safety is a term that is essentially the name of a department within the Authority. By changing the name to ‘Focus on You’ it was hoped that the document could be made more outwardly-focused on what our interactions with the public deliver on the ground. Few comments were made on the name of the strategy overall, but “Focus on You and Your Safety”, “Focus on Your Safety”, “Keeping You Safe” and “Supporting You” were suggested as alternatives at staff seminars.
36. 37 comments were made by questionnaire by members of the public; 25 by members of staff; and ten by stakeholders, on the Focus on You strategy. An analysis of comments is provided in **Table 7** below.

**Table 7: Comments Made on the Focus on You Strategy**

Comment	Response
<b>Cadet force is a good idea, but be careful about who it is made available to and how it is branded</b>	There was strong support for the concept of a cadet force from staff and the public, although a suggestion was made that the term 'cadet force' sounded somewhat militaristic and might not be attractive. Comments were made that not only young people displaying anti-social behaviour should be offered access to the scheme. This is something which any proposal made on the scheme subsequent to consultation will need to consider, but it is likely that the scheme will focus on those most at risk.
<b>Maintenance of an emergency response service</b>	There was some concern about the fire and rescue service deviating from its focus of providing an operational response when needed. In response, this is primarily about how the five primary strategies blend together, although as demand continues to decline, which appears likely, the risk of capacity not being available to perform operational duties due to community safety commitments diminishes. Additionally, community safety work is increasingly a specialist function and has been partially moved away from station-based staff.
<b>The fire and rescue service becoming an extension of Social Services</b>	Some concern was expressed by staff and the public about a perceived shift of the Authority towards becoming an additional 'branch' of Social Services. In effect, through closer partnership working, this is what the Authority is tending to become, and the concern is thought to arise from the same issue raised above, about the capacity to respond operationally when needed, and the same response applies.
<b>Extending the medical care training made available to firefighters</b>	There was support from the public in relation to increasing the equipment available to staff. There was also support from staff to provide a limited emergency response to some medical conditions, if we know we can get there more quickly than the nearest ambulance.
<b>Provision of schools' education</b>	Comments were made by public respondents about the provision of education to young children and this important element of our work was not expressly mentioned in that specific section of the Plan. The importance of this work was noted by members of the public and they sought reassurance that it would continue.
<b>Use of social media to promote safety</b>	A couple of staff respondents stated that traditional methods of communication should not be abandoned in favour of an 'on-line' approach only, and West Malling Parish Council were keen that fire safety information should be made available in accessible formats. Members suggested that this could be in the form of a mobile phone 'app.' In response, the communications team based at Service Headquarters does use a blended approach, but there is a growing trend across the public sector towards social media which is driven by service-user preference.
<b>Anti-social behaviour and domestic violence</b>	One staff respondent was very concerned that domestic violence was used as an example of anti-social behaviour in the Plan. The intention of using this was in no way to belittle domestic violence, but rather to demonstrate that anti-social behaviour is a spectrum, ranging from low-level <i>bad behaviour</i> , through to fatal fires that were deliberately started. When discussing the issue with partner agencies, such as Relate, or a women's refuge, we would not refer to it as anti-social behaviour.

<b>Services for vulnerable people or those with specific needs</b>	<p>The Plan suggested that the Authority should take on the lead role for dealing with bariatric patients, which received a mixed response from staff. Some welcomed it, while others felt we should only be supporting the ambulance service.</p> <p>One staff respondent suggested that the Authority should always respond to calls from vulnerable people, especially the elderly, if they have a broken water pipe in their home, which we do not always do at the moment.</p> <p>One staff respondent also suggested offering services to those displaying hoarding behaviour, as this can also present a risk of fire. They did not suggest what kind of support this might be, however. Hoarding is a growing issue, and is worthy of further consideration under this strategy.</p>
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37. Staff were asked a further series of attitudinal statements, which were not available to other respondent groups. The responses given are summarised in **Table 8** below.

**Table 8: Responses to Attitudinal Statements related to the Focus on You Strategy**

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
<b>Kent Fire and Rescue Service does enough for casualties at the scene of incidents</b>	10.8%	<b>44.9%</b>	24.9%	8.6%	4.3%	6.5%
<b>I feel confident in my medical skills when dealing with more critically injured people</b>	4.3%	25.0%	20.1%	<b>27.7%</b>	11.4%	11.4%
<b>KFRS does enough to help people that may be vulnerable in the community</b>	9.7%	<b>46.2%</b>	25.3%	14.0%	1.1%	3.8%
<b>KFRS cares for the people it helps</b>	23.2%	<b>55.1%</b>	15.1%	4.3%	1.1%	1.1%
<b>KFRS should consider forming a cadet scheme</b>	15.8%	<b>34.8%</b>	20.7%	15.8%	7.6%	5.4%

38. This shows that the majority of staff feel that the Authority does enough for casualties at incidents, and also for vulnerable people in the wider community generally. Staff believe we are also a caring organisation. However, the results indicate that there is a lack of confidence in dealing with more critical injuries for some staff. This could be because these kinds of skills are used less frequently than more basic first aid skills. Alternatively, it could indicate that additional training opportunities to refresh skills and build confidence are required. This will be considered further as part of the strategy.

39. Staff were asked if the Authority should investigate ways in which it could help members of the public after a fire in their home. Overall this was agreed with, as shown in **Table 9** below.

**Table 9: Staff Responses to the Statement “KFRS should investigate ways it could help members of the public after a fire in their home.”**

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
KFRS should investigate ways it could help members of the public after a fire in their home	19.9%	<b>48.1%</b>	16.9%	9.9%	4.4%	1.1%

40. Subsequently staff were asked what kinds of activities this could include. 96 suggestions were made which included:

- Using volunteers to provide a clean-up service;
- Providing a professional clean-up service after a fire;
- Providing trained staff to work with the family, similar to a police family liaison officer;
- Giving guidance on the insurance and claims process;
- Providing reassurance to victims of fire or serious road traffic collisions;
- Simply being available to help or talk;
- Extending the use of the Red Cross service at other locations<sup>3</sup>;
- Developing a peripatetic “Margate Task Force” to go to specific locations which have problems for a short period of time, and then move on to the next.

41. There were some contrary views however, such as:

- “This is the role of Social Services”;
- “This [may take] away business from small and medium enterprises in Kent and Medway”;
- “I would like to see us supporting in a different way in terms of education to prevent reoccurrence”;
- “Organisations like the Red Cross, Salvation Army, WRVS provide these and similar services very successfully on a voluntary basis - Maybe there's scope to look at collaborating with such organisations rather than starting up on our own”;
- “This is the job of insurance companies, landlords, housing associations, local authorities, and the landscape is already complicated enough”.

42. Staff were asked if the Authority should consider any other ways to promote safety to the public, and what these might be. Suggestions made included:

- Attending family orientated events so that safety messages get to whole families;
- Increasing our presence on social media to promote safety;
- Working with insurance companies, perhaps to the level of encouraging discounts for good fire safety measures being taken in the home;
- Make more use of parish councils to promote safety messages on our behalf;
- Engaging more with the small business community providing simple advice and training in fire prevention, how to deal with fire and basic first aid in the same way as the ‘Biker Down’ scheme does.

<sup>3</sup> Red Cross victim support vehicles are located at Thames-side [Gravesend] and Thanet.



43. Television and cinema advertising was also suggested but this is known to be very expensive. A number of staff responded that they thought the ways used now to promote safety were sufficient.
44. Staff were also asked if the Authority should increase its emergency medical care capability. Generally this was supported, with some caveats. A lot of staff respondents welcomed this in areas where it is known that the ambulance service would struggle to attend more quickly than we could. However, staff were keen that it should not be perceived that this was being done to *take over* the ambulance service, and that is certainly not the intention.
45. Many staff were keen for clarity on the kinds of incidents they could be expected to attend, and therefore the scope of any additional training that would be required. This would need discussion in due course with the ambulance service. There was also support for blue light emergency response cars to have defibrillators fitted, and this was also strongly supported by Members at their briefing session.
46. Many staff recognised the role of operational staff (meaning station-based staff in this context) in relation to vulnerable people as being one of generating referrals and knowing their local area, described by one respondent as “being the eyes of the Authority out in the community.” The referral process to the specialist Vulnerable Persons’ Team based at Service Headquarters also appears to be well-known. Some additional information for station-based staff on the signs to look for that might indicate vulnerability might be helpful.

## Focus on Business

47. No suggestions to change the name of the strategy were made as part of the consultation process. 28 comments were made by questionnaire by members of the public; 35 by members of staff; and nine by stakeholders, on the Focus on Business strategy. An analysis of comments is provided in **Table 10** below.

**Table 10: Comments Made on the Focus on Business Strategy**

Comment	Response
<b>More help for small businesses to complete their fire risk assessments</b>	This is an area that we are aware needs additional focus, and will be a key role of the Business Support Team, which is being created. However, as we remain the enforcing authority under the Regulatory Reform Order, we must exercise care in how we provide support to a company we may end up taking enforcement action against.
<b>Ensure that the media and website content that we have is useful</b>	The content of the website is continually reviewed. As part of the project to purchase a new, more sophisticated content management system for the website, the option of some self-service may become available, reducing the need for businesses to contact us direct.
<b>Consider offering a fire safety course instead of issuing an Enforcement Notice</b>	This suggestion extends the concept of driver education programmes, whereby points on a driving license can be avoided by attending a course. Under this proposal, a business or number of businesses that are at risk of enforcement action being taken against them could attend a course as a last chance to get their management processes in order before tougher action is taken. This will be considered as part of the strategy.
<b>Keep attending Automatic Fire Alarms so avoiding any fire risk.</b>	<p>The decision to call-manage AFAs, based on a full risk assessment, and published as part of last year's Plan, has been demonstrated to be a reasonable and practicable one. Since the decision to stop attending during the day was made, there has only been one case where a false alarm call was subsequently confirmed to be a fire. A second call alerted the Authority very quickly after the first call was made, a fire crew attended and the small fire that was present was speedily dealt with. Returning to a policy of attending all AFAs is neither a good use of public money, nor of firefighters' time.</p> <p>It is also not the case that attending a call from an AFA avoids fire risk. If it is a fire, then it has already happened, so the risk has been realised.</p>
<b>Develop a business emergency planning support campaign</b>	Campaigns around this issue have already been run, and can be rerun if required.
<b>It is understood that procurement regulations are restrictive, but I feel that we should, where possible, use small businesses for services and products that we need to procure.</b>	This is a long-running debate amongst staff, and the simple answer is that to only use businesses based in Kent and Medway would be illegal under European law. However, there is nothing to stop small and medium size businesses tendering for work with the Authority, and recent simplifications to the tendering process will hopefully assist Kent and Medway businesses to quote for work with us.

48. Comments received from the public were generally positive but non-specific.

49. Staff were asked how they thought firefighters might help deliver support to smaller businesses they meet when out in the community. Suggestions made included:

- having a range of leaflets with basic information which could be left with business owners should crews have cause to visit;
- awareness training for staff on the latest developments in technical fire safety;
- offering a free business safety check scheme;
- training on a few key messages they can give, e.g. three simple steps and link to website advice;
- noting company details and referring them to a specialist team who would follow up with phone calls to provide further advice;
- passing on basic life support skills to businesses.

50. These suggestions have been passed to the strategy authors to consider as part of the development of the strategy.

## Focus on Resilience

51. Although only staff queried the name of the strategy, it is accepted that “resilience” is not a term that is well-known by the public. Several alternative suggestions were made for the name of the strategy including:

- Focus on Planning and Response
- Focus on Response
- Responding to Emergencies
- Focus on Operational Response

52. 35 comments were made by questionnaire by members of the public; 36 by members of staff; and eight by stakeholders, on the Focus on Resilience strategy. An analysis of the comments made is provided in **Table 11** below.

**Table 11: Comments Made on the Focus on Resilience Strategy**

Comment	Response
<b>Fitting GPS to all service vehicles</b>	Automatic vehicle location allows Control staff to know the position of a vehicle in relation to a reported incident. It would help with dynamic mobilisation as, at present, when a fire engine is not at the fire station its location can only be ascertained from radio messages. It is hoped that as part of the migration to the Police’s mobilising system, this functionality will become available.
<b>A lot more needs to be done so that we can guarantee our minimum crewing commitments given in the last IRMP.</b>	This comment was made by a member of staff. The minimum commitment made was to not have fewer than 42 fire engines available for any significant period of time, as this would impact on how quickly we can reach incidents. Recent average availability performance has been better than this level. However availability is not yet at a level that we are happy with. This is why additional staff are being recruited for specific on-call stations, and contractual flexibility is being explored as part of the Focus on Staff strategy.
<b>We should be wary of trying to make a 'Police- designed' mobilising system fit our needs where call handling and mobilising is concerned</b>	In the present financial climate, a bespoke system simply is not an option. It is believed, having completed a risk assessment and assessed its functionality, that the Police’s mobilising system is flexible enough to adequately support our current and future mobilising requirements.
<b>“Let’s not rush into thinking that a car with four firefighters can back up other appliances at incidents. Fire appliances do not just carry staff and water, they carry a whole host of safety equipment that firefighters use at most incidents”</b>	Whilst this point made by a member of staff is true, the point is that the equipment is already at the incident, on fire engines that have already been taken there. By tying up more and more fire engines at incidents, fewer are then available for any subsequent incidents that occur. The proposal in the Plan to look at ways to re-crew these fire engines seeks to overcome this. There was support from the public and stakeholders to investigate this issue.
<b>Are there any areas of the county that could be exposed to major flooding that would impact on the service we provide.</b>	The risk of wide-area flooding formed part of the county-wide risk assessment published as part of last year’s Plan.

<p><b>After the restructure appliances are now travelling further afield with longer response times. By changing hours worked this will not reduce the travel distances or response times.</b></p>	<p>The assertion that attendance times are increasing is not borne out in the data reported to Members. However it is true to say that fire engines are moving around the county much more than they used to, in order to maintain emergency cover. Additional recruitment of part-time firefighters will also help to limit the need for stand-by moves.</p>
<p><b>For remote locations such as Grain, with relatively small communities to draw from... the extended turn-in crew can still respond locally quicker than another appliance can respond. However... there are many locations where the extended turn-in would not be appropriate.</b></p>	<p>A technical appendix was published alongside the Plan about the possibility of extending turn-in times at specific part-time stations, where they were isolated. The FBU has commented upon this, and their comments are welcomed. In response to the comment from the FBU "<i>we have concerns with any watering down of response times, and would welcome any joint initiatives to encourage On Call recruitment to meet the current 5 minutes standard</i>" there is no interest in watering down response times, and the proposal in the technical appendix highlighted that only a few areas would derive benefit from this proposal.</p>

53. As the Authority is considering changing the way in which firefighters respond to incidents, using various modes of transport, staff were asked what issues they saw this creating. This produced a lot of comments, some of which were positive and some negative. Some of the verbatim comments made were:

**Positive comments**

- “Better use of our resources, say using a response car to carry one or two people, instead of needing to take a whole appliance and crew to certain incidents”;
- “Depending on the nature of the call! There may be times when a motorbike with a pannier would be best”;
- “The use of personnel carriers is perfect for those occasions where personnel are required. But the education of the officer in charge needs to focus on what is actually required when they make up”;
- “Providing there is adequate equipment, a core of people available and no significant time lag, I would not be bothered what vehicle extra personnel arrived in”;
- “This is a good idea but must be handled in the correct way. This is definitely not something that should be rushed into. The changing of response vehicles must be sympathetic with the needs of the area that it will cover”.

**Negative comments**

- “Concern[ed] that purchasing vehicles which are then rarely used would be a false economy”;
- “Difficult to reassure the public that this is not a cut”;
- “Relief crews not having enough equipment (e.g. breathing apparatus sets)”;
- “Not being able to respond to another incident as not in a fire appliance”;
- “Lack of ‘ownership’ of equipment on fire engines”;

- “Is there any difference between sending extra appliances to incidents and sending a vehicle all around picking them up[.] certainly not if you’re looking at carbon footprint, time & urgency”.
54. These comments have been passed to the strategy authors to consider as part of the development of the strategy.

## Focus on the Environment

55. One comment was made by a staff respondent on the name of this strategy, suggesting that it should be changed to “Caring for the Environment”. 29 comments were made by questionnaire by members of the public; 46 by members of staff (the highest number of comments by staff on any of the five primary strategies); and eight by stakeholders, on the Focus on the Environment strategy. An analysis of comments is provided in **Table 12** below.

**Table 12: Comments Made on the Focus on the Environment Strategy**

Comment	Response
<b>A system should be developed so that an attendee [on] a course knows who else is going so that arrangements can be made to share transport.</b>	This is an excellent idea and should be progressed as part of the Focus on the Environment strategy.
<b>Lighting linked to movement sensors, air source heat pumps, biomass heating, solar power etc could all be installed in premises but this will involve capital outlay initially to gain the rewards.</b>	Cost benefit analysis of retrofitting to existing sites will need to be conducted, as some of our buildings face the wrong way to make investing in solar panels worthwhile. All new-build fire stations will include energy saving measures, and will also meet local planning requirements.
<b>More training could be done on station where possible, especially for soft skills/management development training.</b>	Taking training to staff is happening much more, and the Organisational Development Team is always happy to travel to see people rather than bringing them to SHQ.
<b>An incentive/reward scheme for stations/departments to reduce energy use.</b>	This has been considered before, when the financial climate was different. If a scheme can be developed which allows limited self-help schemes funded partially by station-based savings then it would probably help encourage participation. However, it has to be remembered that the wider impact of wasting money on energy is jobs. Every £30k spent on energy equates roughly to one person's job. To maintain our aspiration to avoid compulsory redundancy of any member of staff, this needs to be understood as a real issue.
<b>The amount of standby moves being made must have an impact on our carbon footprint.</b>	<p>We accept that standby moves are being made more frequently. Partially this is as a result of some gaps in the on-call establishment, which are being filled through recruitment, as well as some contracts not being well-matched to the times we need cover. Again this issue is being addressed.</p> <p>In the shorter term, there is work which the Central Crewing Team, Control and Groups can do to minimise the number of standby moves made, which is being progressed as part of the variable crewing project.</p>
<b>Vehicle fuel reduction information delivered as part of driver courses and updates.</b>	This is a good idea too, and will be considered as part of the interaction between the Focus on Staff and the Focus on the Environment strategies.
<b>Reducing the need to (still!)</b>	Whilst some processes have been e-enabled, there is still a

<b>require paperwork to be submitted for making overtime and expense claims.</b>	way to go. This comment reflects this.
<b>Consider the fuel efficiency of appliances. There are many old appliances that may not be as efficient as modern ones. Better design of the electrics so that engines don't have to keep running at incidents when they are not pumping but still in use, e.g. at RTCs.</b>	New fire engines conform to the latest standards for emissions. Also any move towards different kinds of vehicles in place of fire engines will improve efficiency further.

56. Staff were also asked if they should take a more active role in reducing energy usage. Overwhelmingly the answer was yes, which is positive. There was a recognition that saving energy was important morally, but also to protect the Authority in the current financial climate. The detailed suggestions made have been shared with the authors of the Focus on the Environment strategy to consider.



## Focus on Staff

57. Limited comments on the name of the strategy were received from staff. These comments suggested that the name of the strategy should be 'Workforce Strategy.' This name has been used for earlier iterations of the document, and appears to be well-known. 25 comments were made by questionnaire by members of the public; 41 by members of staff; and seven by stakeholders, on the Focus on Staff strategy. An analysis of the comments made is provided in **Table 13** below.

**Table 13: Comments made on the Focus on Staff Strategy**

Comment	Response
<p><b>Reliability of IT provision at stations.</b></p>	<p>New hardware and software currently being rolled out will improve reliability of the IT infrastructure across the Authority. This includes video streaming which will assist with e-learning packages. We know that the quality of video has been a source of frustration for station-based staff, as it has been for the IS department.</p> <p>The new IT infrastructure will also allow much more effective version control of documentation so that the information contained on the intranet is up to date and old documentation is deleted as it is replaced.</p>
<p><b>Focus on staff fitness and obesity. Medicals yearly and for all. Annual fitness testing to encompass more challenging tests. Overweight staff on capability until within 10 % of their correct body weight. In turn a work force with less medical concerns and a greater image projection.</b></p>	<p>Fitness is already a focus for the Authority, and significant investment has been made in gyms on stations, and physical education instructors. However, the overall well-being of each individual is the responsibility of that individual and any who have concerns should raise them with their GP. It is not the role of the employer to provide detailed and potentially invasive medical screening over that which is provided now, as it would be prohibitively costly.</p>
<p><b>We already have modular training packages for certain skills. I think we should add RTC to this in light of the rapid speed of development of vehicle technologies and also maybe other topics such as Building Construction. And I also think that we should sit online assessments on these skills - refreshers at regular intervals between the Full 2 or 3 yearly certification.</b></p>	<p>This issue has been raised with the authors of the Focus on Workforce strategy to consider.</p>
<p><b>Improving how courses are allocated to staff.</b></p>	<p>Some respondents commented that they had been waiting for courses for some time. These comments have been shared with the Organisational Development Team and will be followed up.</p>
<p><b>The live fire training has been a big step forward for everyone.</b></p>	<p>It is pleasing to note that this training has been well-received.</p>

<p><b>Develop a single process to collate all the information needed from the attending firefighters [to incidents], rather than having to report essentially the same information in many different places.</b></p>	<p>This issue has been raised with the Head of Community Safety and Head of Operational Response to consider how it can be streamlined.</p>
<p><b>Not enough focus on learning and development for Service Support staff.</b></p>	<p>By the nature of their roles, there is less opportunity for service support staff to progress and also seek promotion within the Authority. However, facilities are available to access courses, both those provided by the training centre, and others related to continuous professional development. It may be that this message needs reaffirming to service support staff.</p>
<p><b>We must not lose sight that we need firefighters with the practical skills which help them to adapt and deal with unprecedented incidents. No two jobs are the same. Not everybody is managerial material and we should praise the career firefighter with years of experience and not look down upon them just because they are not looking for promotion.</b></p>	<p>From a management point of view, we support these comments. Career firefighters who are open to change but happy in their role are valued as they provide a role-model for younger firefighters outside of the management structure.</p>

58. Staff were also asked, in relation to the role they have NOW, what they think are the skills the organisation will NEED them to have to deliver an effective service in the future. From the presented options, **Table 14** highlights the results.

**Table 14: Responses to Question: “In relation to the role you have NOW, what do you think are the skills the organisation will NEED you to have to deliver an effective service in the future”:-**

Answer Options	Response Percent
Improved medical care skills	49.1%
Better levels of fitness	36.0%
More live-fire training	45.6%
Better preparation for moving upwards through the organisation	64.9%
Better IT skills	41.2%
Specialist rescue skills, e.g. for bariatric (morbidly obese) patients	41.2%

59. Staff could also make their own suggestions of the skills they feel that they will need in the future, and these are summarised below:

- Interview techniques for promotion;

- Dealing with people - not necessarily colleagues but more importantly members of the public;
- A new approach to incident command considering resources and personnel available;
- A better understanding of what we do, how and why;
- Information sharing and more regular informal contact with middle managers;
- More RTC refresher/update input to keep up with vehicle developments;
- Tactical skills training;
- Management skills;
- Change management, influencing, coaching and feedback skills;
- Fire safety in business training;
- Large incident multi-agency training;
- Fitness/physical strength tests;
- Awareness of the issues surrounding vulnerable people.

60. The final question in this section sought to understand how broadly staff thought about issues that affect the Authority. Overwhelmingly, staff are concerned about what happens across the whole organisation, and this is a pleasing outcome. **Table 15** summarises the results from this question.

**Table 15: Staff Responses to Question: “When considering broad issues that affect KFRS, where does your interest end”:-**

Answer Options	Response Percent
Your Watch	2.2%
Your Station	4.5%
Your Cluster	1.5%
Your Group	3.0%
The whole of Kent and Medway	88.8%

## Section 3: The Plain English Test

61. All respondents were asked how easy they found the Plan to read and how easy they found the questionnaire to complete. The results were pleasing, as shown below:

**Table 16(a)(i): Responses to Statements about the Plan – Public**

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
The Towards 2020 Update was easy to read	29.3%	<b>48.8%</b>	14.6%	6.1%	1.2%	0.0%
I understood the Towards 2020 Update	26.3%	<b>56.3%</b>	13.8%	2.5%	1.3%	0.0%
The layout of the Towards 2020 Update was an improvement on previous years	18.8%	31.3%	42.5%	1.3%	1.3%	5.0%

**Table 16(a)(ii): Responses to Statements about the Questionnaire – Public**

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
The questionnaire was easy to complete	25.9%	<b>54.3%</b>	13.6%	3.7%	2.5%	0.0%
I understood the questionnaire	27.5%	<b>63.8%</b>	7.5%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
The layout of the questionnaire was an improvement on previous years	14.3%	19.5%	<b>54.5%</b>	5.2%	0.0%	6.5%

**Table 16(b)(i): Responses to Statements about the Plan – Staff**

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
The Towards 2020 Update was easy to read	9.2%	<b>55.0%</b>	26.0%	4.6%	3.8%	1.5%
I understood the Towards 2020 Update	10.7%	<b>66.4%</b>	17.6%	3.1%	0.8%	1.5%
The layout of the Towards 2020 Update was an improvement on previous years	5.3%	43.5%	<b>45.0%</b>	0.8%	1.5%	3.8%

**Table 16(b)(ii): Responses to Statements about the Questionnaire – Staff**

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
The questionnaire was easy to complete	7.6%	<b>64.9%</b>	14.5%	11.5%	1.5%	0.0%
I understood the questionnaire	10.7%	<b>76.3%</b>	11.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%
The layout of the questionnaire was an improvement on previous years	6.9%	41.2%	<b>42.0%</b>	3.1%	2.3%	4.6%

**Table 16(c)(i): Responses to Statements about the Plan – Stakeholders**

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
<b>The Towards 2020 Update was easy to read</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	0.0%	9.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>I understood the Towards 2020 Update</b>	45.5%	<b>54.5%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>The layout of the Towards 2020 Update was an improvement on previous years</b>	18.2%	<b>54.5%</b>	27.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**Table 16(c)(ii): Responses to Statements about the Questionnaire - Stakeholders**

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
<b>The questionnaire was easy to complete</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>I understood the questionnaire</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>The layout of the questionnaire was an improvement on previous years</b>	18.2%	<b>36.4%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

62. Amongst the comments made by staff and a few members of the public was that the questionnaire was much more wordy this year and this might put people off. We accept this point, but there was no other way of capturing views on the issues.
63. Pleasingly, no respondent group raised any examples of any jargon used which was not explained in the glossary of terms .

## Conclusions

64. This is a much more low key Plan compared to the previous years and the reduction in the number of responses can be closely linked to the less controversial nature of the Plan. Added to this, the fact that there were no questions for young people this year has probably reduced the overall volume of responses by around 300. However it would not have been right to create questions for this group just to boost the number of responses when there was no need to consult separately with them. Perhaps the most disappointing outcome is the number of responses from the business community. Although notoriously difficult to engage with, it was hoped to at least match the level achieved as part of last year's Plan.
65. Nonetheless, overall there was support for the five primary strategies that are being developed. No suggestions were made by any group that a critical element has been missed and needed to be included in one of the strategies, or that an entirely new strategy was needed. New names for the strategies and for the Plan itself were suggested, which it is recommended are taken forward.
66. The final learning point relates to the structure of the questionnaire itself. Because the content was largely seeking comments, it is accepted that this has put people off from replying. It is also true of the video, which had a high-drop out rate. In future years, when more concrete proposals are made, it is anticipated that there will be a greater use of attitudinal statements which are easier to complete, as well as video summaries of individual chapters within the Plan. The new website is likely to give additional functionality to improve the service user's experience of giving their views to the Authority.