

# Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

## Assets Strategy 2018-22

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# Introduction

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to **working together, saving lives and reducing harm**. Our objectives and Strategies focus on home safety, road safety, assisting businesses, responding to emergencies, and protecting the wider community from the impact of major events.

In doing so we recognise the need to have an estate in the right places, supported by a fit for purpose fleet of vehicles to provide rapid operational response.

This Strategy covers the management of our fleet and estate. A separate Strategy sets out our aspirations in terms of information technology. As well as these, there are six others which give detail on our overall aspirations, as set out in the Customer and Corporate Plan. Each is supported by a summary high-level action plan, showing major developments or changes planned within the life of each Strategy.

The **Property and Facilities Team** manages and maintains the estate. The estate is made up of fire stations, some limited housing capacity at some day-crewed fire stations, training venues and Headquarters. The majority of the portfolio of buildings are over 40 years old, with two sites having historical interest (one listed) and three fire stations having been built between 2014 and 2017<sup>1</sup>.

The buildings on the estate have been subject to an effective regime of maintenance, upgrading of facilities and redevelopment over the past five years.

Going forward, we are looking towards utilising the existing buildings and sites within the portfolio to maximise space through alteration, refurbishment and redevelopment opportunities. We will also take steps to increase energy-efficiency and reduce running costs of the building stock wherever possible. We will continue to provide spaces for other partners and agencies to work and co-locate through site sharing and collaboration, as well as provide fit for purpose emergency response bases for the Authority.

A programme of station development and new-builds will also provide new, state of the art, multi-use response bases at strategic sites across the county, improving the service to our customers in Kent and Medway.

**Fleet Services** is a service support function and consists of a small team who are the first port of call in regard to fire engines, specialist vehicles, cars, ladders, plant and equipment. Our focus is on the maintenance of fleet, ensuring assets are utilised as fully as possible and are able to be deployed to emergency incidents as required. The team has a key role in developing new approaches to firefighting through new vehicles with innovative capabilities. It also has a role in encouraging good driving behaviour by anyone that drives the vehicles we own. We cannot promote driving behaviour-change through our community safety work if we do not demonstrate those behaviours ourselves when on duty.

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<sup>1</sup> New fire stations are Ash-cum-Ridley (on-call), Rochester (whole-time) and Chatham (whole-time).

## Overview of current assets

Table 1: Total Fleet as at 1 March 2018

Vehicle Type	Number of Vehicles
Fire Engines (including reserves)	103
Specialist Vehicle – Front Line	36
Specialist Vehicle – General	38
Response Car	83
Pool Car	106
Van	59

## Overview of current estate

The current estate is made up of the following buildings:

- 56 fire stations;
- Technical rescue centre;
- Distribution centre;
- 3 training venues including the Authority's main training centre;
- 29 houses;
- the Headquarters site in Maidstone;
- land acquired for the construction of new fire stations;

The **Infrastructure Plan**<sup>2</sup> for the estate is made up of a mixture of day to day, programmed, and cyclical maintenance, planned revenue and capital projects, larger scale new-builds and redevelopments, and is run over a rolling programme. The annual delegated budget for the delivery of the Estate Management functions is £1.7m for property and £550k for facilities management. The Property and Facilities team is responsible for a rolling £100k budget to implement energy-efficient solutions in the running of buildings and sites across the portfolio.

The **Vehicle Replacement Programme**, also included in the Medium Term Financial Plan, sets out the overall approach to the renewal, replacement, extension or disposal of vehicles, plant and equipment.

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<sup>2</sup> Part of the Medium Term Financial Plan

## Governance

The Director, Finance and Corporate Services, represents property issues at Corporate Management Board level, while fleet issues are represented by the Assistant Director, Finance. Supporting this Strategy are a number of policy documents which set out in detail roles and responsibilities of relevant groups of anyone that works for us. Examples include:

- Property Sharing Service Order;
- Driving for Work Service Order.

Day to day, the responsibility for maintaining and improving the property portfolio sits with the Head of Property and Facilities. Day to day responsibility for fleet issues rests with the Fleet and Transport Strategy Manager. However, there is a need for a holistic approach to ensure that we meet our objectives and there are a number of forums whereby property and fleet-related issues are discussed before reaching CMB for decision, to make sure a rounded view of our proposals are gained early in their development.

Every aspect of our support services are scrutinised as we seek to learn. There are good practice and regulatory frameworks in place. People that work for us in support services are encouraged to maintain their professional skills as a mechanism to ensure quality. In certain professions this can include membership of professional bodies such as surveying, for which continuous professional development records have to be maintained.

Scrutiny is provided through feedback and debate, and we use that to change many aspects of what we do. Members provide scrutiny of all our work through Authority meetings. We also have external and internal audit bodies who look in detail at many aspects of our processes and practice.

## Achievements to date

### Property

The changing demographics and infrastructure of Kent and Medway mean that we have to constantly assess how we deliver service to customers. An outcome in terms of property was the need identified to make provision for new fire stations and facilities, and the closure of a number of fire stations.

A new-build project programme has been in place since 2012 and this has delivered three, 21<sup>st</sup> century-ready fire stations, with a fourth currently under construction in Ramsgate. The disposal of eleven fire stations, as well as a number of service houses, has raised capital receipts of £8m which have been used to fund the new-build programme, avoiding the need for borrowing.

#### New fire stations – Ash-cum-Ridley



Ash-cum-Ridley fire station, the first new fire station we had built in almost twenty years, opened in November 2013, and used a mixture of new local recruits and existing firefighters that moved from the closed Horton Kirby fire station. Horton Kirby fire station was sold at auction once Ash was operational

We have made environmental improvements across the estate including the installation of new, energy-efficient boilers and heating systems, as well as photovoltaic (PV) panels on 37 buildings including Headquarters. Smart metering has been introduced to monitor usage and improve data collection, together with campaigns to change the behaviour of everyone that works for us and visitors to our sites in the way they use the buildings. Other improvements to buildings through better insulation, double-glazing and heating controls have also contributed to the reduction in energy-use and improved efficiencies. The target for reducing the carbon footprint we set was a challenging 35% and, over the last three years, there has been a significant improvement in energy efficiencies, equating in an overall reduction of 29.5%.

### Fleet

We have invested in 29 new, smaller fire engines, and these have been distributed to stations. In 2012, we removed all fleet and provided cars from staff, and replaced them with a fleet of marked response cars for on-duty officers, with pool cars available to everyone else to book and use when they needed them. We are now looking at our requirements for the future as these cars reach the end of their life.

## Our future plans

Our assets of fleet and buildings are fundamental building blocks for a modern fire and rescue service. We have ambitious plans to change how we think about our use of these assets, within the lifetime of this Strategy.

### Property

#### Fire stations

The property portfolio has been maintained to a higher standard over the last five years and these works have contributed to a reduction in reactive maintenance works and thus a reduction in spend across the estate as a whole. Going forward, programmed maintenance and planned cyclical works have been included in the Property Infrastructure Plan to ensure the integrity of our property assets and to maintain compliant working environments for customers and everyone that works for us.

**Action 1: Complete Condition Surveys of the Estate by March 2019:** Condition Surveys will be undertaken. These surveys will form the basis of future works and will support us in building the Infrastructure Plan for the next five years.

**Action 2: Complete the new Ramsgate Fire Station by January 2019, and begin investigations at other sites:** We have a programme of new-builds we would like to do, with Ramsgate due to go live in 2019. Whilst a number of sites are in our thinking currently, progressing them relies on us being able to afford them, finding a suitable site for each, and pursuing a partnership approach between us and other agencies. We will therefore focus on refurbishments across the entire estate, including training facilities, making improvements to as many as possible.

#### Planned Capital and Revenue Projects

Capital projects are planned which will benefit the Service and service delivery. These include the re-grading and relaying of appliance bay floors, replacement of windows and doors, replacement of fire and intruder alarm systems across the estate, installation of replacement boilers and heating systems, and bay doors. Other projects being considered are the replacement of existing dormitories and new storage arrangements for firefighters' personal protective equipment; security improvements across the estate including additional access control on all external doors; location of gates and barriers at specific sites; and collaboration and sharing of property with Police, Ambulance and other agencies and local services. The current programmed maintenance regime has monitored the condition of our assets and forms the basis of a renewal programme, particularly regarding mechanical, electrical and plumbing installations.

**Action 3: Improve the Estate as a Working Environment for as many of us as possible, by March 2021.**

#### Environmental improvements

The installation of PV panels across the estate has had huge benefits for the Service in terms of carbon footprint-reduction and savings in energy costs. This, coupled with the

improvements to heating and lighting, window and door installations, re-roofing and insertion of insulation across the portfolio, has made our building stock more energy-efficient and provided more comfortable spaces to work in. Stored energy from PV installations and through the use of batteries is a new horizon, and research will be undertaken to understand the benefits this may bring us and how it may be implemented in future years. Other projects include LED Lighting replacement on fire stations, where appropriate, to improve quality of lighting for end-users and reduce energy usage, and cost and energy saving improvements through the new-build and station development programme. Emphasis will focus on maintaining the current levels of savings without affecting our current carbon footprint through continued communication and messaging and behaviour change.

**Action 4: Research New Developments in PV installations and share the learning with the fire and rescue sector by March 2021.**

### **Collaboration and Property Sharing with Police and other partners.**

Collaboration with Police and other partners is really business as usual for us. Our redevelopment programme will deliver a number of premises where formal sharing of office and ancillary spaces with other blue light services can be achieved. We do not charge other public agencies for space on our estate as part of our partnership approach. We have looked at the experiences of other fire and rescue services who are also at different stages of collaboration, and recent visits have identified areas where collaboration has been successful. However, there are lessons learned and these will be taken forward into the programme.

SECAmb currently utilise 11 fire stations for welfare of their teams. They are currently under Licence to Occupy and we will look to extend these arrangements as a demonstration of our commitment to improving medical response arrangements across Kent and Medway. Other informal arrangements across our existing estate include allowing PCSOs, Council Wardens, Red Cross, Institute of Advanced Motorists, Health and Safety Executive, and the joint teams we have between us, Kent County Council and Kent Police for Community Safety, and Resilience. Going forward, consideration will be given to formalising these arrangements through licences and agreements and offering surplus accommodation to other agencies and local authorities wherever possible.

**Action 5: Extend Licences for Occupation of our Premises by SECAmb, and continue to respond positively to requests to increase the overall level of sharing of our premises from blue light and public sector partners.**

### **Income Generation**

We receive a small amount of income related to our assets. Generally our position is we do not seek to make income when we provide services, but when income is possible to generate from access to our estate by the private sector, especially communications companies, we will seek to take advantage of this.

**Telecommunications:** Telecommunications providers currently occupy six sites across the portfolio and this generates an income for us.

**Feed-in Tariff:** The installation of photovoltaic panels across 37 sites has generated 340,500kw/hrs of energy, equating to approximately £40k per annum in feed-in tariff.

This will increase slightly with the installation of arrays at Ramsgate and, looking forward, Herne Bay.

**Disposals and Capital Receipts:** Over recent years surplus property has included 11 fire stations and a significant number of houses linked to day-crewed fire stations. These properties have been sold for community use or on the open market through property auctions, and to date have generated approximately £8m in capital receipts. The old Ramsgate fire station will become surplus to requirements in January 2019 along with the Westwood Cross Training facility. In due course we will look to dispose of these sites in a way which achieves best value.

**Action 6: Dispose of redundant sites at Ramsgate and Westwood Cross by March 2021, and any other buildings as soon as practicable, working with the local community wherever possible.**

### **Savings and Value for Money**

The Property and Facilities Team have contributed to energy savings for the service with a programme of upgrades to buildings and equipment, such as heating and lighting systems, insulation, water saving installations and management systems. An example of this can be seen with the introduction of LED lighting across part of the estate which has improved energy efficiency and reduced costs at these sites. Typically, a wholetime fire station will save £2,941.00 cost savings per annum and 14,161kgco<sub>2</sub> in carbon savings, and the benefits of these installations equate to reduced lighting costs, savings on electricity bills of 15-20%, longer life for bulbs (50,000hrs) and improved light levels and light quality. New technologies and systems, better build-quality and energy efficient materials have also been embedded into the new fire stations ensuring lower running and maintenance costs going forward.

Improved procurement strategies have enabled the team to procure contracts and services for longer periods – up to four years – giving surety around service delivery for planned and reactive works, value for money and, ultimately, savings. This has been achieved across a number of contracts and we will be working with our Procurement and Commercial Team to work collaboratively with other partners and agencies, and to utilise frameworks to ensure that savings on services and works can be achieved. Alongside this, we will be engaging with the market to gauge interest and promote our requirements on the correct platform to ensure time and money is not wasted during the tender stages.

In-house expertise through the use of the Property Team for project and contract management, CAD services and Building Surveying duties has meant that the need to outsource to consultants or specialist teams has been minimal. By undertaking these roles, the team are cost-effective and provide value for money by reducing the need for external professional services on a majority of the planned revenue and capital projects, as well as BAU works and reactive maintenance. The Facilities Team also manage contracts in-house with the Facilities Manager being responsible for all Facilities contracts and monitoring including cleaning, landscape maintenance, furniture replacement, etc. The Facilities Assistant undertakes minor repairs, engraving, furniture delivery and removal and deliveries which would otherwise be outsourced. Recently, the Facilities contract regarding cleaning was awarded as part of a collaborative tender with Kent Police, and further opportunities will

be looked at with regard to sharing frameworks and tender processes for other Facilities and Property functions.

The sharing of property with other agencies and partners is a key workstream. Plans are progressing with other blue light services to share sites and properties across the county. Other agencies, such as the Immigration Service, are also working with the Head of Property to secure a hub location in north Kent and a number of partners are already utilising the space at Rochester RSE making use of the available space and accommodation.

## **Future Innovation and opportunities**

The construction sector is constantly innovating and developing new ways to improve and develop the built environment. The Service will be able to benefit from new technologies, products and processes keeping our estate fit for purpose and energy efficient with reduced maintenance costs. This could be achieved through the new-build and station development programmes.

Modular buildings have been developed to provide a quick and efficient alternative for new-build projects, reducing time but not quality of build. This type of construction could be considered as part of the new-build programme or redevelopment of existing sites.

The use of hand-held devices to undertake surveys, day to day audits and project management would be of huge benefit for the team and would enable the surveyors to send defects, photographs and information back to the office or a contractor quickly and efficiently. A compatible Property Management System would also allow for all the estate and property-related information and documentation to be kept securely in one place rather than on separate, individual platforms, supporting the aspirations set out in the **Information Technology Strategy**.

We have piloted the use of the Service's drone. The use of a drone allows the Property and Facilities Team to undertake surveys of buildings and structures safely without the need to work at height. The 3D software used on the camera allows the team to produce 3D images of our buildings. This means we can produce comprehensive plans and elevations and services' layouts for use by the team. A thermal imaging camera would also provide us with information regarding heat loss at each site and therefore assist in specifying improvements to the buildings where required. This is an example of how IT can support better decision-making across our organisation.

As part of succession planning, it is an aspiration to have two Apprentices working for the Property and Facilities Team from 2018, one as a Surveying Technician (Level 3) and one as a Building Surveyor (Level 6). These two positions would give opportunities for the existing team members to act as mentors, provide a training environment with experienced practitioners for the Apprentices, and give the team resilience.

**Action 7: Review available and developing technology relevant to asset management and feed the results back to the organisation. Complete this work as new opportunities are identified.**

## Fleet

### Review inspection and servicing regimes

Cyclical inspection and servicing regimes have been in place for some time. We will re-examine them taking into account our actual usage, financial impact and any updated manufacturers' guidance, and then use technology to programme future schedules.

**Action 8: Review and formulation of a rationale behind changing cyclical safety inspections and major servicing regimes.**

### Review the replacement programme

Our fleet renewal programme has historically been based around a fixed operational lifespan. The term has varied dependent upon the type of vehicle with the light fleet being kept for seven years, and fire engines and specialist vehicles for up to 15 years. Based on the existing replacement policy, approximately 40% of the heavy and light fleet is now due for replacement. Given the fact that many vehicles are now lasting longer than our current replacement policy, due largely to increased reliability as a result of improved technology, it would seem reasonable to assess each vehicle on a case by case basis. It is crucial also to consider both the operational need and also whether the vehicle continues to be fit for purpose. This will make the renewal programme more fluid with vehicles being replaced based upon need, but it does rely on close monitoring of the fleet performance and hence realistic medium term planning.

**Action 9: Update our approach to vehicle renewals reducing our overall fleet size of fire engines.**

We have decided to fit telemetry and tracking systems to all our vehicles and CCTV will be fitted to all front-line fire engines and response vehicles. It is anticipated that the installation of these systems will start in February 2018 and be completed by the end of 2018. We anticipate this will result in a significant reduction in our insurance premiums.

The use of this type of system will enable the organisation to collect tracking and telemetry data for the first time. Driving behaviour will then be able to be managed as necessary, targeting those drivers who are identified as a "risk".

There are a number of cashable cost-saving opportunities from not keeping under-utilised vehicles; buying less fuel due to better economy; less CO<sub>2</sub> emitted due to reduced engine idling; a reduction in insurance premium charges from insurers; and lower vehicle maintenance charges due to less wear and tear. In addition to the above, there are some organisational efficiencies that cannot be specifically costed at this time. These include an improved accident rate due to better driving, being able to accept or reject insurance liability more quickly, and the withdrawal of paper vehicle log-books.

The introduction of telemetry systems that record individual driver behaviour is widely accepted as one of the key changes within the driving industry in the past decade. One positive aspect is the ability to identify specific issues with a personal driving style, so that driver training can be tailored to suit. There are a number of areas where efficiencies can be achieved. A reduction in speed of travel and engine idling will improve fuel efficiency, while reduced harsh braking will decrease the likelihood of accidents and will extend the life of

brake components, thus reducing the cost of maintenance. The cumulative effect over the whole fleet is likely to be significant. For example, a 5% reduction in fuel usage would equate to a saving of £27k per year. This should also reduce the admittedly low level of complaints we receive, the majority of which are related to driving.

**Action 10: Use CCTV and Telemetry Data to manage our fleet more effectively and increase utilisation. Complete the installation by December 2018. Use the data to change driver behaviour where necessary. Target a 5% reduction in fuel usage by March 2021 compared to April 2018.**

### **Light fleet review (vehicles under 3.5 tonne gross vehicle weight)**

This review started in July 2017. The scope of this project includes reviewing the current business travel arrangements with the intention of improving efficiency. It will also include identifying the organisational requirement for light fleet vehicles, including vehicle-type and how future fleet vehicles may be allocated. The final stage of this project will be to provide feedback as to the specification of the vehicles before starting the procurement process.

**Action 11: Complete the Light Fleet Review (vehicles under 3.5 tonne gross vehicle weight).**

### **Collaboration**

We are already at the forefront of collaboration with other service providers to facilitate better services to customers. We work closely with Kent County Council in respect of heavy fleet maintenance and provide additional resources when required. An initial discussion with Kent Police has identified a possible collaboration opportunity. Kent Police do not have a Mobile Technician Service and their ability to provide a 'first aid' response to minor defects is minimal. It is feasible that KFRS may be able to assist with this service. In turn, Kent Police carry out servicing and maintenance of their light vehicle fleet internally, whereas at KFRS this is currently outsourced. It is therefore appropriate that options that will potentially benefit both services should be progressed in the near future.

**Action 12: Investigate the appetite for a Joint Mobile Technician Service between us and Kent Police by March 2019. If will exists, implement by March 2020.**

### **Alternative funding methods**

Vehicle funding is a complex area of public finance. As mentioned previously, KFRS historically used capital funds to buy vehicles. It is expected that fire service funding will be squeezed in the future, so the prospect of maintaining the capital funding seems unlikely. With this in mind, alternative funding methods for the light fleet, such as contract hire, daily and flexible hiring, have become more popular recently. As part of the replacement programme for vehicles, alternative service delivery options will be considered to determine the most efficient and effective way of procuring the vehicles for the Service.

**Action 13: Review alternative ways of providing fleet to the organisation by March 2020.**

## Action Plan

Ref	Action	Owner	Target date
1	Complete conditions surveys of the estate by March 2019.	Lynne Kemp	March 2019
2	Complete the new Ramsgate Fire Station by January 2019, and begin investigations at other sites.	Lynne Kemp	Jan 2019
3	Improve the estate as a working environment for as many of us as possible, by March 2021.	Lynne Kemp	March 2021
4	Research new developments in PV installations and share the learning with the fire and rescue sector by March 2021.	Lynne Kemp	March 2021
5	Extend licences for occupation of our premises by SECamb, and respond positively to requests to increase the overall level of sharing of our premises from blue light and public sector partners.	Lynne Kemp	
6	Dispose of redundant sites at Ramsgate and Westwood Cross by March 2021, and any other buildings as soon as practicable, working with the local community where possible.	Lynne Kemp	March 2021
7	Review available and developing technology relevant to asset management and feed the results back to the organisation. Complete this work as new opportunities are identified.	Lynne Kemp	March 2021
8	Review and formulation of a rationale behind changing cyclical safety inspections and major servicing regimes.	Gary Mitchell	March 2021
9	Update our approach to vehicle renewals reducing our overall fleet size of fire engines.	Gary Mitchell	March 2021
10	Use CCTV and telemetry data to manage our fleet more effectively and increase utilisation. Complete the installation by Dec 2018. Use the data to change driver behaviour where necessary. Target a 5% reduction in fuel usage by March 2021 compared to April 2018.	Gary Mitchell	March 2021
11	Complete the Light Fleet Review (vehicles under 3.5 tonne gross vehicle weight).	Gary Mitchell	
12	Investigate the appetite for a joint mobile technician service between us and Kent Police by March 2019. If will exists, implement by March 2020.	Gary Mitchell	March 2020
13	Review alternative ways of providing fleet to the organisation by March 2020.	Gary Mitchell	March 2020

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