



KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting of the Authority

Thursday, 22 July 2021

10.30 am

AGENDA

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday 22 July 2021 at 10.30am

Ask for: Marie Curry
Telephone: (01622) 692121

Held at Rochester Fire Station, Marconi Way,
Rochester, ME1 2QX

Membership of Authority for 2021/22 (new Members shown in **bold**):-

Appointed by Kent County Council (21):- **Mr P Barrington-King**, **Mr D Beaney**, Mr A Booth, Mr N Chard, **Mr P Cole**, Mr N Collor, **Ms K Constantine**, **Mr D Crow-Brown**, Mr D Daley, **Ms M Dawkins**, **Mr M Dendor**, Mr P Harman, Mrs S Hohler, **Ms S Hudson**, **Mr D Jeffrey**, **Mr R Love OBE**, Mr S Manion, Mr J McInroy, **Ms L Parfitt-Read**, Mr A Ridgers, Mr C Simkins

Appointed by Medway Council (4):- Mr B Kemp, Mr V Maple, Mr R Thorne and Mr S Tranter.

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 2021/22
- A2. Election of Vice-Chair for 2021/22
- A3. Chair's Announcements *(if any)*
- A4. Membership Changes and Apologies for Absence
To note Membership changes that have been made for 2021/22 (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 Authority held on 27 April 2021 *(for approval)*
- A7. Minutes of a Meeting of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee held on 27 April 2021 *(for information)*
- A8. Minutes of a meeting of the Hearings Panel held on 21 June 2021 *(for information)*

B For Decision

- B1. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies for 2021/22
- B2. Appointment of Independent Person
- B3. Customer Safety Plan 2021/25
- B4. Final Financial Outturn 2020/21
- B5. Internal Audit Annual report 2020/21
- B6. Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21
- B7. Annual Governance Statement 2020/21
- B8. External Auditors' Audit Findings Report 2020/21
- B9. Annual Statement of Accounts 2020/21

- B10. Financial Update 2021/22
- B11. Governance and Policy Update

C For Information

- C1. Road Safety Presentation
- C2. Information Update (*Consolidated Report*)

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 Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act

- E2. Abatement Update

Marie Curry
Clerk to the Authority

9 July 2021

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 a Meeting of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 27 April 2021.

PRESENT:- Mr N Chard (Chair), Mrs A Allen, Mr M Angell, Mr A Booth, Mr D Brazier, Mr I Chittenden, Mr A Cook, Mr P Harman, Mr B Kemp, Mr P Lake, Mr S Manion, Mr V Maple, Mrs S Hohler, Mr R Thorne and Mr S Tranter (Vice-Chair) and Mr M Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

APOLOGIES:- Mr N Collor, Mr D Daley, Miss E Dawson, Mr D Farrell, Mr G Lymer, Mr J McInroy, Miss Morton, Mr A Ridgers and Mr C Simkins and Mr B Sweetland

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss Ann Millington QFSM; Director, Operations, Mr Chris Colgan; Director Finance and Corporate Services, Ms Alison Kilpatrick; Director, Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety, Mr Jon Quinn; Assistant Director, Operational Response, Mr Mark Rist; Assistant Director HR and Learning, Ms Karen Irvine; Assistant Director, Resilience, Mr Lee Rose; Assistant Director, Corporate Services, Mr James Finch; Assistant Director, Customer and Building Safety, Mr Colin King and Clerk to the Authority, Mrs Marie Curry.

IN ATTENDANCE:- Ms J Guyler, Monitoring Officer; Mr P Cuttle, Grant Thornton UK LLP; Ms F Smith, KCC Internal Audit; and Mr R Smith, KCC Internal Audit.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

44. Chair's Announcements

(Item A1)

- (1) The Chair welcomed Ms J Guyler as the Authority's Interim Monitoring Officer; Mr P Cuttle from Grant Thornton UK; Ms F Smith and Mr R Smith from KCC Internal Audit.
- (2) The Chair reported that this was the last meeting to be attended by Chris Colgan, the Director, Operations before his retirement in May. The Authority placed on record their thanks to Chris and wished him well in his retirement.

45. Membership

(Item A2)

- (1) The Chair thanked those Members who were not standing again in the forthcoming elections for their service to the Authority and wished them well for the future.

46. Minutes – 23 February 2021

(Item A4)

- (1) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 23 February 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

47. Minutes of the Hearings Panel – 23 February 2021

(Item A5)

- (1) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Hearing Panel held on 23 February 2021 be noted.

48. Minutes of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee – 4 March 2021
(Item A6)

- (1) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee held on 4 March 2021 be noted.

49. Performance Out-turn 2020/21
(Item B1 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members considered a report which detailed how the Authority has performed over the last financial year and medium term period of 2018-21. Performance is considered against targets and how these compare nationally. Members were also provided with an update on the work completed by the Authority during the Pandemic.
- (2) Mr Chard, on behalf of the Authority, thanked all staff for their continued hard work and commitment shown throughout the Pandemic.
- (3) Mr Maple echoed Mr Chard's thanks and praised the #KentTogether campaign with Kent Partners. In response to a question Mr Maple raised around capacity to support businesses in terms of safety as they are now opening again after a long period of being closed, Director Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety responded by saying that various mechanisms have been put in place to support businesses with reopening following lockdown as well as the Authority having recruited additional Building Safety Officers to assist with Safety Audits.
- (4) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the provisional year end performance report be approved.

50. Financial Update for 2020/21
(Item B2 - Report by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)

- (1) Members received the penultimate financial update report for 2020/21 which contained the latest forecast outturns against the revenue and capital budgets for the 2020/21 financial year; a Treasury Update for 2020/21 and proposed amendment to the 2021/22 Treasury Strategy; an update on the disposal of vacant land at Medway Fire Station; details of an amendment to the 2021/22 revenue budget as well as other financial updates.
- (2) Mr Chard thanked the Director, Finance and Corporate Services and her team for their hard work in looking after the Authority's finances.
- (3) In response to a question posed by Mr Lake about Authority lending, Director, Finance and Corporate Services responded by giving reassurances that any due diligence is always carried out before any agreement is entered in to.
- (4) In response to a concern raised by Mrs Hohler about the removal of the £15m limit that can be invested in to Money Market Funds, the Director, Finance and Corporate Services said that she would be happy to set this limit at £25m to give flexibility and should the need arise to change this then the proposal would come back to Members for approval. Members therefore requested for recommendation 3 within the report to be amended and this is reflected in recommendation (c) below.
- (5) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the transfer of £1m of the final underspend to the Infrastructure Reserve, be approved;
 - (b) any underspend in excess of £1m be transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve, be approved;
 - (c) *Increase the limit of deposits on Money Market Funds from £15m to £25m.*

- (d) An additional £550k be allocated from the Infrastructure Reserve to fund urgent roof repairs, be approved.
- (e) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

51. External Audit Plan 2020/21

(Item B3 - Report by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)

- (1) Mr P Cuttle, Grant Thornton UK introduced, for Members' consideration, the External Auditors Draft Audit Plan for 2020/21 as well as the template for informing the Audit Risk Assessment.
- (2) A question was raised by Mrs Hohler in relation to the Audit Risk Assessment. It was highlighted that it stated that staff with banking access were 'expected' to undertake a DBS check but Mrs Hohler felt that this should be a stronger requirement. The Director Finance and Corporate Services responded by agreeing that the word expectation would be replaced by mandated.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the Audit Risk Assessment, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
 - (b) the draft External Audit Plan for 2020/21 financial year, as attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
 - (c) The Authority placed on record its thanks to Grant Thornton for their work.

52. Internal Audit Plan 2021/22

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

- (1) Ms F Smith, Head of KCC Internal Audit introduced, for Members' consideration, the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22, along with the Audit Charter and Key Performance Indicators.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
 - (b) the Internal Audit Charter, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;
 - (c) the proposed Key Performance Indicators for the Internal Audit, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved;
 - (d) the Authority placed on records its thanks to KCC Internal Audit for their work.

53. Corporate Risk Register

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

- (1) Members were presented with an updated Corporate Risk Register which has been amended to reflect a new risk in relation to the impact of the delay in guidance to support the legal ruling to the McCloud vs Sargeant pension case.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the amendments to the Corporate Risk Register, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
 - (b) the update on the Register be noted.

54. Policy and Governance Update

(Item B6 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members gave consideration to two new Policies, the first relating to Domestic Abuse and the second relating to People Impact Assessment. The report also sought endorsement of the National Core Code of Ethics produced by the National Fire Chiefs' Council as well as providing an update on the development of the Authority's Customer Safety Plan and supporting strategies.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the Domestic Abuse Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
 - (b) the People Impact Assessment Policy, as attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;
 - (c) the National Core Code of Ethics, be noted;
 - (d) the development of the Authority's Customer Safety Plan and supporting strategies, be noted.

55. Pensions Update

(Item B7 – Report by Assistant Director HR and Learning)

- (1) Members considered a report that provided a detailed update on the recent Employment Tribunal ruling for the McCloud Vs Sargeant Case. The report also covered an update on other Pension related matters including the O'Brien Employment Tribunal case, discretions regarding transfers-in of pensions and the revoking of the Restriction of the Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020.
- (2) Due to the ever changing complexities surrounding pensions, Members also received an Addendum to the report, which was circulated prior to the meeting, that provided the latest information with regards to the McCloud vs Sargeant Case and in light of that information two additional recommendations as set out in c and d below, for Members to consider.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) delay the implementation of the remedy actions from the O'Brien case until there is sufficient guidance from the Home Office be approved;
 - (b) the discretion of allowing the transfer-in of previous pension provision for new employees, to occur only within the first 12 months of starting employment with the Authority be approved;
 - (c) those colleagues who are due to taper in the period between now and 31 March 2022, will not be tapered across before 1 April 2022, subject to the individuals agreement, be approved;
 - (d) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, can decide to progress the payment and recalculation of the Immediate Detriment cases, should sufficient information be available to do so, prior to the Authority meeting in July 2021, be approved.

56. Appointment of an Independent Person

(Item B8 – Report by Clerk to the Authority)

- (1) The provisions of the Localism Act 2011 requires that every local Authority appoints at least one Independent Person whose view must be sought in relation to any allegation made that a Member of the Authority has breached its Code of Conduct.
- (2) Members considered a report which sought agreement to undertake a recruitment process to appoint an Independent Person for the purposes as outlined.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the proposed recruitment process to appoint an Independent Person for a three year term, be approved;
 - (b) the Job Description and Person Specification for the role of Independent Person, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
 - (c) the advertisement for the recruitment of the role of Independent Person, as attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;
 - (d) the remuneration for the Independent Person, be approved.
 - (e) The shortlisting and interviewing be undertaken by a Panel comprising of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, plus the two Opposition Group Leaders or their nominees, be approved.

57. Creation of an Audit and Governance Committee

(Item B9 – Report by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)

- (1) Following a decision taken by the Authority at its meeting on 23 February 2021 to the creation of an Audit and Governance Committee, Members considered a follow-up report which set out the Terms of Reference as well as the agreement to recruit an Independent Member as Chair of the Committee in line with CIPFA's recommended good practice.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Governance Committee, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
 - (b) the appointment of an Independent Member to Chair the Audit and Governance Committee, be approved;
 - (c) the Job Description, Person Specification and advertisement, as attached as Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;
 - (d) the membership of the Audit and Governance Committee will be established in consultation with the Chair of the Authority and Group Leaders in line with the Authority's Standing Orders, be approved;
 - (e) the Authority undertakes a joint recruitment exercise alongside Kent Police and that the same remuneration package is offered to the successful candidate, be approved.

58. Customer Service Survey Presentation

(Item C1 – Presentation by Customer Experiences and Behaviour Change Lead)

- (1) Members received a presentation on the results of the recent independent survey carried out by the Institute of Customer Service which asked Kent and Medway residents to provide feedback on interactions they had with Kent Fire and Rescue Service, measuring success against categories of experience, customer ethos, ethics and complaint handling.
- (2) Members placed on record their thanks to staff for all their continued hard work which has been reflected within the scoring of the survey.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the presentation be noted.

59. Information Update

(Item C2 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered information updates on:-
 - A. Pandemic;
 - B. Inspection and National Issues;
 - C. Performance;
 - D. Operational Issues;
 - E. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety;
 - F. Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme;
 - G. Electronic Communications Code Consultation;
 - H. Pension Board.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) The contents of the report be noted.

EXEMPT ITEMS (Open Access to Minutes)

60. Abatement

(Item E2 – Report by Chief Executive)

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

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

MINUTES of a meeting of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 27 April 2021.

PRESENT:- Mr N Chard (Chair), Mr D Brazier, Mr V Maple and Mr S Tranter (Vice-Chair)

APOLOGIES: Mr D Daley

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

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Substitutes

(Item 1)

None

2. Declarations

(Item 2)

None

3. Minutes

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that, because of the infrequency of meetings, the Chairman of the Committee be authorised to sign the agreed Minutes of the meeting.

4. Motion to Exclude Press and Public

(Item 5)

RESOLVED that, 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 involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(Open Access to Minutes)

5. Appointment of Director, Operations

(Item 6)

- (1) Members considered proposals for the appointment of a Director, Operations;
- (2) The Interview Panel comprised of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, plus the other Members of the Senior Officer Appointments and Conditions Committee;
- (3) The Committee conducted an interview with the one shortlisted candidate. The candidate was required to give a presentation on a set topic and then questioned against the essential criteria detailed within the Person Specification for the post in order to demonstrate the key competencies required for the role;

- (4) Following the interview, Members then evaluated the evidence against the key competencies for the role;
- (5) The Interview Panel received feedback from the new EDI Panel and Officer/External Stakeholder Panel which formed part of day one's assessment.
- (6) On the basis of the evaluation and feedback, it was:-
RESOLVED that, the appointment of Director, Operations is offered to Mr Mark Rist.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

HEARINGS PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of a Hearings Panel of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Monday, 21 June 2021.

PRESENT:- Mr N J D Chard, Mr D Daley, Mr P Harman and Mr V Maple

OFFICERS:- Mrs K Irvine, Assistant Director, HR and Learning (part of the meeting) and Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chair of the Panel

Mr Maple proposed Mr Chard, Mr Harman seconded.

RESOLVED that, Mr Chard be elected Chair of the Panel for this hearing.

2. Declarations of Interest

Mr Harman declared that he was an ex-London Firefighter and ex-Kent Retained Firefighter so was in receipt of Fire Service Pensions.

2. Signing of Minutes

RESOLVED that the Chairman be authorised to sign the agreed Minutes of the Hearing.

3. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that, 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 involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEM (Open Access to Minutes)

4. Pension Dispute – Stage 2 of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (IDRP) (Item 5 - Report by Assistant Director HR and Learning)

- (1) The Panel considered information relating to a collective appeal raised by the FBU on behalf of Day Crewed employees against the decision taken at the Stage 1 process of the IDRP.
- (2) In her response to the Stage 1 IDRP complaint, the Assistant Director, HR and Learning, outlined the process that was undertaken by which the decision was made to not uphold the appeal at this stage.

- (3) The Panel carefully examined all the information presented to it, including correspondence received from the Kent FBU Secretary registering an appeal under the Stage 2 IDRP, the reasons for the appeal as well as supporting evidence. The Panel also considered the principles identified as a result of the Booth Vs Mid and West Wales Court case known as the 'Blackburne Principles' and how this was applied during the process undertaken at Stage 1 of the appeal.
- (4) The Panel then requested Assistant Director, HR and Learning to join the Hearing to answer some technical questions posed by Members.
- (5) Following the clarity the Panel received to their technical questions and having considered very carefully all the written evidence submitted to it, the Panel was content that there had already been a thorough review undertaken of all pay elements across the Authority following the outcome of the Booth Vs Mid and West Wales court case and that in relation to this appeal, full due diligence was undertaken at the Stage 1 process in order for a decision to be reached. Therefore the Panel unanimously RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) The collective appeal made in response to the decision taken at the Stage 1 IDRP not be upheld.

By: Clerk to the Authority

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021

Subject: REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES FOR 2021/22

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report will review the political proportionality as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and confirm the allocation of Committee places to the political groups. It will also confirm the Authority's membership of outside bodies for 2021/22 and agree the allocation of the Authority's places and votes on the Local Government Association's (LGA) General Assembly and LGA Fire Commission.

Finally it will detail the arrangements for the appointment of Members to the Authority's Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee (SOAC), Audit and Governance Committee and Hearings Panel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Agree, for the purposes of the statutory annual review of proportionality, the allocation of Committee places to the political groups (Table 1 and paragraphs 2 to 5 refers);
2. Agree the size and composition of the SOAC Committee (Table 1 and paragraphs 4 and 5 refers);
3. Agree the size and composition of the Audit and Governance Committee (Table 1 and paragraph 5 refers);
4. Agree that the Chair and Group Leaders jointly agree the appointment of the Independent Chair for the Audit and Governance Committee (paragraph 6 refers);
5. Agree that whenever a Hearings Panel needs to be convened, it should comprise of four Members (one drawn from each of the four parties) and where required on the nomination of the Group's Leader (paragraph 7 refers);
6. Confirm the allocation of places and voting rights on the LGA General Assembly (paragraph 8 refer).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Clerk to the Authority - Marie Curry
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EMAIL: marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Background

1. At its annual meeting each year the Authority must review its political proportionality at meetings; re-establish its Committee structure; confirm the membership of outside bodies alongside the allocation of Members who serve on these committees. As a consequence this report addresses each of these considerations in turn.

Annual Review of Proportionality

2. The Authority is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review its scheme of proportionality at its Annual meeting each year. The Act requires that political attendance at these committees (both overall and within each Committee) is 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). However, the Authority may decide (on the basis that no Member votes against such a proposal), to adopt some other arrangement.
3. Since the last annual review of proportionality there has been a change in membership of the Authority due to the Kent County Council elections. The current composition of the Authority is outlined below;

Cons: 20 Lab: 3 Lib Dem:1 Green and Independents:1 and PCC

Appointment of Members to Serve on Committees

4. The Authority has two Committees subject to the proportionality rules which are the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee (SOAC) and the newly formed Audit and Governance Committee. The Authority has previously agreed that, because of the nature of the business that the SOAC Committee conducts (including interviewing and appointing candidates for the most senior appointments), it was an advantage for its membership to be smaller than strictly proportional, whilst still giving the majority party a major seat on the Committee. Members are therefore asked to agree to continue to retain a small SOAC composition with a political balance shown in **Table 1**.
5. In terms of the Audit and Governance Committee, Members will be appointed to serve on this Committee by the Clerk, on the nomination of the Group Leaders and in line with the requirements of the Act. Members are again asked to agree the size and political composition of the newly formed Audit and Governance Committee as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Composition of Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee

Committee	Total	Con	Lab	LD	G&I	Ind Chair
Authority	25	20	3	1	1	0
SOAC Committee	5	3	1	1	0	0
Audit and Governance Committee	11	7	1	1	1	1

6. Members will recall that it was agreed at the April Authority meeting to recruit an Independent Member to Chair the Audit and Governance Committee in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) recommended good practice. Following that meeting a recruitment process was undertaken by an external recruitment provider who advertised both Chair roles for this Authority and Kent Police. The closing date for applications was Monday 28 June. It is fair to say that the interest in both roles has been limited so in taking advice from the recruitment agency and speaking with the Chair, it was decided to extend the deadline for applications for another 4 weeks in order that the advert can be placed in other suitable areas. As the deadline has been extended this will mean that timescales have slipped and it is now more likely that an appointment to the role will not be made until September. Members are therefore asked to agree that following any successful interview process the appointment of an Independent Chair for Audit and Governance is made in consultation between the Chair of the Authority and the Group Leaders.
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 Panels. The role of Hearings Panel is to hear cases in relation to allegations made against any Member that may have breached the Code of Conduct and appeals by staff against certain disciplinary and pension decisions. Panels are called together as and when they are required. Members are therefore asked to agree that whenever a Hearings Panel does need to be convened, it should comprise of four Members (one drawn from each of the four parties) and where required on the nomination of the Group's Leader.

Representation on Outside Bodies

8. It is proposed that the Authority continues its representation on the LGA General Assembly and LGA Fire Commission and as such Members are asked to reconfirm the existing allocation of places and voting rights, as shown in Table 2 and 3 below. Members will be

aware that the Authority's appointments to the LGA General Assembly is only nominal as the Authority does not normally send any representatives to the LGA's Annual Conference (of which the General Assembly meeting forms a part).

Table 2: Appointments to the LGA General Assembly

<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Lib Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
Mr N J D Chard* (1 'corporate' vote and 14 votes on fire issues)	Ms K Constantine (1 vote on fire issues)	Mr D Daley (1 vote on fire issues)	Mr P M Harman (1 vote on fire issues)

Table 3: Appointments to the LGA Fire Commission (Two Members, normally the Chairman and Vice-Chairman).

Mr N J D Chard*
Mr S A Tranter
(* as Chairman of the Authority)

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9. There are no resource implications arising from this report but it is important that the Authority complies with the statutory political proportionality requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. Members are requested to:
 - 10.1 Agree, for the purposes of the statutory annual review of proportionality, the allocation of Committee places to the political groups (Table 1 and paragraphs 2 to 5 refer);
 - 10.2 Agree the size and composition of the SOAC Committee (Table 1 and paragraphs 4 and 5 refer);
 - 10.3 Agree the size and composition of the Audit and Governance Committee (Table 1 and paragraph 5 refers);
 - 10.4 Agree that the Chair and Group Leaders jointly agree the appointment of the Independent Chair for the Audit and Governance Committee (paragraph 6 refers);
 - 10.5 Agree that whenever a Hearings Panel needs to be convened, it should comprise of four Members (one drawn from each of the four parties) and where required on the nomination of the Group's Leader (paragraph 7 refers);
 - 10.6 Confirm the allocation of places and voting rights on the LGA General Assembly (paragraph 8 refers).

By: Chief Executive
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021
Subject: APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PERSON
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

Following the decision taken by the Authority at its meeting on 22 February 2021 and 27 April 2021 respectively, this report now seeks Members approval to the appointment of an Independent Person following a successful interview process.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the appointment of Jennifer Waterman as the Authority's Independent Person for an initial period of three years from the date of this meeting (paragraphs 3 and 4 refer).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Clerk to the Authority - Marie Curry
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EMAIL: marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Background

1. Members will recall that when the relevant provisions of the Localism Act came into effect in 2012, it required that every local authority appointed at least one Independent Person (IP) whose view must be sought before reaching a decision following investigation of any allegation made that a Member of the Authority has breached its Code of Conduct.
2. The Authority at the time decided that it would appoint just one IP and agreed with Kent County Council (KCC), which also decided to appoint just one IP, that the Authority's IP acts as a substitute for KCC's (in their absence) and vice versa.
3. On 1 July 2020, KCC made a re-appointment of their current IP for another four year term. As a result of this it was agreed by the Authority at its April meeting to appoint one IP for a term of three years which will then bring the process back in line with the reciprocal arrangements this Authority already has in place with KCC.

Recruitment Process and Appointment of an Independent Person

4. The Authority also agreed at its meeting in April, the arrangements for the recruitment process of the IP and in accordance with these arrangements, an Interview Panel comprising of the Chair of the Authority; Vice-Chair of the Authority; the Labour Group Leader as well as the Lib Dem Group Leader, interviewed three candidates on 21 June 2021 and 1st July respectively. Following a successful interview process the Panel recommends Jennifer Waterman for the appointment of the Independent Person to the Authority. Jennifer has recently retired from full time employment where she had worked within the Public Sector environment for a number of years. Jennifer has an extensive HR background, working in various senior positions throughout her career with her most recent role being Head of HR within the Financial Reporting Council.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5. Under the Localism Act, the Authority is required to appoint at least one Independent Person and by doing so assists the Authority to maintain the current high standards of conduct demonstrated by its Members.

RECOMMENDATION

6. Members are requested to
 - 6.1 Approve the appointment of Jennifer Waterman as the Authority's Independent Person for an initial period of three years from the date of the meeting (paragraphs 3 and 4 refer).

By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021

Subject: CUSTOMER SAFETY PLAN 2021-25

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

The Customer Safety Plan 2021-25, is presented for Members' consideration.

Underpinning the Customer Safety Plan 2021-25 is a suite of six new strategies. Included in the Plan and the covering report are the key strategic indicators which form an indicative balanced scorecard of performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the Customer Safety Plan for 2021-25 (**Appendix 1** refer);
2. Approve the draft Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy 2021-25 (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 2** refer);
3. Approve the draft Response and Resilience Strategy 2021-25 (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 3** refer);
4. Approve the draft People Strategy 2021-25 (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 4** refer);
5. Approve the draft Commercial Procurement Strategy 2021-25; (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 5** refer);
6. Approve the draft Environmental Improvement and Assets Strategy 2021-25;(paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 6** refer);
7. Approve the draft Business Change, Information and Technology Strategy 2021-25;(paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 7** refer);
8. Approve in principle that the Authority's command and control function will remain co-located with Kent Police (**paragraph 9** refers);

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Assistant Director, Corporate Services – James Finch
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext 8453
EMAIL: james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

9. Note the development of the balanced scorecard approach for the Customer Safety Plan, and its initial iteration (paragraphs 10-11 refer);
10. Approve the strategic targets set for 2021-25 (paragraphs 12-18 and **Table 1** refer);
11. Note the revised “history of change” statement (paragraph 19 and **Annex 1 to Appendix 1** refer);

COMMENTS

Background

1. Each year Members are asked to consider a Plan setting out the Authority's aspirations for the coming time period, linked to its Medium Term Financial Plan. This Plan is called the Customer Safety Plan, highlighting to the public that all actions the Authority takes are intended to support them as customers.
2. The Customer Safety Plan remains the Authority's only corporate plan and is supported by a suite of corporate strategies. It is also supported by the Safety and Wellbeing Plan process which highlights to customers new and emerging issues the Authority needs to react to. Any new projects introduced in the Safety and Wellbeing Plan are subsequently subsumed into the following year's Customer Safety Plan.
3. **Customer Safety Plan:** The draft Customer Safety Plan 2021-25 is attached at **Appendix 1**. It represents a significantly different approach to previous plans. It looks at potential future risks and challenges that research has suggested may have an impact on the Authority. These risks are aligned to the proposed new corporate strategies showing which will address any short to medium term actions the Authority can take now.
4. **Aim and objectives:** The Authority's aim and objectives have been reviewed and remain fit for purpose apart from one small amendment to align with the Authority's newly developed brand guidelines. Members may recall these are colloquially referred to as the "bubbles" and are used in visual displays across fire stations in Kent and Medway (**Figure 1** refers).
5. **Corporate Strategies:** Underpinning the Plan is a set of six new strategies. A summary of each is included in the Plan. Links to the strategies will be available on the Authority's website in due course.
6. We refresh our corporate strategies every four years. They set out our aims over that period and what we would like to achieve. Each strategy follows a broadly similar template, with an introduction, what has been achieved, and then a look forward to what we want to do next. The first two of the strategies are outwardly-focused: the Customer Safety and Engagement Strategy (attached at **Appendix 2**) covers the Authority's engagement, campaigning, prevention and protection roles; and the Response and Resilience Strategy (attached at **Appendix 3**) deals with operational service delivery and emergency planning. The remaining four strategies are more inwardly-focused:
 - People Strategy (attached at **Appendix 4**)
 - Commercial and Procurement Strategy (attached at **Appendix 5**)
 - Environmental Improvement and Assets Strategy (incorporating the Climate Action Plan (attached at **Appendix 6**))

- Business Change, Information and Technology Strategy (attached at **Appendix 7**)

Figure 1: Aim and Objectives for 2021-25



7. The Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy has been designed in draft as an example of how each could look as a final product. Members are asked to approve the draft strategies which are attached at **Appendices 2 to 7**.
8. There are some measures within the People Strategy which are still in development, as indicated in **Appendix 4**. This work is in progress and will be completed over the summer.
9. **Fire and Rescue Control Centre:** At the meeting of the Planning and Performance Committee held in 4 May 2012 (minute 33) Members approved the relocation of the Authority's fire and rescue control centre from the Godlands building in Maidstone to the Kent Police estate. As part of this relocation we have since that time shared all the technology that comprises a command and control system. In light of the Grenfell and

Manchester Arena inquiries and their focus on joint situational awareness between agencies, the foresight of the current arrangements has become even clearer and as such the continued co-location of both control teams provides benefits to the wider community. Members may be aware that Kent Police plans to exit its existing site at Sutton Road in Maidstone over the coming years, consequently it is proposed that the fire and rescue control centre remains co-located with Kent Police at the proposed new premises at Kent Police's Coldharbour site in Maidstone, although the exact timelines for this movement are not yet known. Members will note that the Environment and Assets strategy (**Appendix 6**) comments on the relocation of the fire and rescue control centre. Kent Police intends to begin consultation with its employees in the autumn. In light of this, Members are requested to approve in principle that the Authority's fire and rescue control team will also relocate at the same time as Kent Police to Coldharbour, or another location as agreed with Kent Police.

10. **Strategic Performance Measurement:** The key priorities and key actions from each of the proposed new strategies are presented, alongside the key performance indicators in the form of a newly adopted approach called a balanced scorecard which will be used to measure the Authority's overall delivery of service to customers. Included in the plan is the draft scorecard for 2021/22, with indicators drawn from each strategy, and cross-cutting corporate measures added through engagement with an expert in value for money assessments as part of a national piece of work the Authority participated in.
11. The intention is that the balanced scorecard provides a high level overview of overall performance, supplementing all the other performance monitoring the Authority will continue to perform. Some of the measures are one off events, such as publication of the transparency in supply chains statement and are examples of good governance in action. Others are indicators which will change on a monthly basis as conditions alter around us, such as the indicator on total fires. It is likely as new issues become apparent that indicators will be added to the scorecard, and existing ones removed, and this is the principle of the balanced scorecard in essence – to drive further questions and interrogation of performance, whilst at the same time looking at overall delivery of our strategies.
12. **Other Performance Monitoring:** In addition to the balance scorecard approach, each of the objectives is supported by a number of key performance measures or indicators, intended to demonstrate that progress overall is being made in the delivery of the Plan. But performance indicators are not the only measure of success that will be used. Customer feedback, longitudinal studies of behaviour change and case studies of success or failure, and a more formalised process of debrief and learning from incidents will also be used.
13. All strategic indicators have been aligned to the objectives outlined in the Plan. Other local performance indicators are also used and targets for those are presented below.

Members will be aware from reports to the Authority recently that demand for fire activity has steadily been increasing since the last set of three-year targets were set, and projections predict that this will continue.

14. Members will be aware that the strategic targets are generally set over a three year period, referred to as the medium-term reporting period, however there are a two indicators that are set on an annual basis; absence rate and attendance at unwanted calls to automatic fire alarms. The last medium-term reporting period came to an end in March 2021.
15. The targets presented below are for the new medium-term reporting period of 2021-24. In principal targets are set to both strive for an improvement against previous performance as well as an improvement against previous targets. They have therefore been set as challenging based on current performance, although few represent an improvement on previous target levels. However, the previously set targets for fires were incredibly ambitious and have not been met over the last three years, with the exception of fires in the home. The continued warm dry summers and prolonged periods without rainfall has considerable impacts on the number of outdoor and rubbish fires which consistently bring performance in over targets.
16. Whilst there is a need for continued drive in education and awareness to reduce these types of fires, it is considered that the targets need to increase from previous levels to provide a more realistic picture whilst still providing a challenge.
17. Special consideration also needs to be given to the Covid-19 pandemic. Generally the previous three year average would be used to inform target setting for the forthcoming medium-term period. However the pandemic means that the last financial year is not truly reflective of business as usual. For example considerably fewer road traffic collisions were attended during Covid than ours and partners prevention activity alone could have influenced and this trend is very unlikely to continue as traffic volumes increase towards previous levels. A similar picture is true of fires in non-residential buildings, many of which were closed during at least part of the pandemic. For this reason, we have considered the previous medium term reporting period to be 2017-20 and not included the 2020/21 financial year in these numbers. We have of course considered last year's activity, but removed its influence when using averages.
18. It is proposed that the sickness absence target remains the same as last year. Although this target was met in 2020/21, it is likely the pandemic and ways of working will have influenced the outturn and therefore a further year to monitor performance is preferred before the target is further reduced.

Table 1: Proposed Performance Measures

Medium-term Targets	2018-21 Avg. Outturn	2018-21 Target	2021-24 Target
Total fires	4,327	4,091	4,210
Accidental fires	2,610	2,324	2,415
Accidental dwelling fires	531	547	532
Accidental grassland fires	522	337	396
Accidental rubbish fires	447	310	361
Accidental vehicle fires	450	448	448
Deliberate fires	1,716	1,767	1,795
Deliberate dwelling fires	69	59	70
Deliberate grassland fires	346	357	352
Deliberate rubbish fires	559	583	573
Deliberate vehicle fires	384	353	385
Non-domestic fires	253	269	265
Annual Targets	2020/21 Outturn	2020/21 Target	2021/22 Target
Unwanted calls to AFAs attended	1,991	2,000	2,000
Absence rate – All staff	3.09	3.50	3.50
Absence rate – Operational	3.76	4.01	4.01
Absence rate – Corporate	1.49	2.22	2.22

19. **History of change:** The Authority has presented a history of change document as part of its Corporate Plan since 2015. This has proved to be a very useful document for organisational memory and for inspection processes, run by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services. It has been refreshed, looking back across the last strategy period and is presented at **Annex 1 to Appendix 1**.

20. **Approach to Risk Assessment: Annex 2 to Appendix 1** details our approach to foreseeable customer and premises risk across Kent and Medway and how this informs our response arrangements in all their forms.
21. **Adoption of Fire Standards:** Also included **Annex 3 to Appendix 1** is a statement on the adoption by the Authority of standards as published by the Fire Standards Board.
22. The Plan is presented for Members' consideration and approval, subject to any minor text amendments that may be identified in converting the document to a web-based presentation style. A version will be also be designed as a printable document.
23. **Efficiency Plan:** Members will recall considering a report by the Director of Finance at the February 2021 meeting of the Authority, which considered financial governance (item B2). Members approved the recommendation to "expand the annual Efficiency Statement to demonstrate our approach to delivering improved value for money whilst ensuring financial resilience across the organisation".
24. Whilst this used to be a mandatory requirement for a four year financial settlement, it is felt to be a useful piece of documentation and preparation for future inspections, and also demonstrates good financial governance and broadening of thinking in relation to value for money issues, in line with the report Members considered in February 2021. It is strongly linked to the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-25. If Members approve the strategies attached to this report, the efficiency plan will be refreshed and brought to a future meeting for Members' consideration. It is intended to not just look at how we can spend less, but also how we can drive better value across all we do in other areas, such as protecting the environment through investment and business change.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

25. Proposals and projects contained in the Customer Safety Plan can be contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-25, as approved by Members at the February 2021 meeting of the Authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

26. Members are requested to:
 - 26.1 Approve the Customer Safety Plan for 2021-25 (**Appendix 1** refer);
 - 26.2 Approve the draft Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy 2021-25 (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 2** refer);
 - 26.3 Approve the draft Response and Resilience Strategy 2021-25 (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 3** refer);
 - 26.4 Approve the draft People Strategy 2021-25 (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 4** refer);

- 26.5 Approve the draft Commercial Procurement Strategy 2021-25; (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 5** refer);
- 26.6 Approve the draft Environmental Improvement and Assets Strategy 2021-25; (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 6** refer);
- 26.7 Approve the draft Business Change, Information and Technology Strategy 2021-25; (paragraphs 5-6 and **Appendix 7** refer);
- 26.8 Approve in principle that the Authority's command and control function will remain co-located with Kent Police (**paragraph 9** refers);
- 26.9 Note the development of the balanced scorecard approach for the Customer Safety Plan, and its initial iteration (paragraphs 10-11 refer);
- 26.10 Approve the strategic targets set for 2021-25 (paragraphs 12-18 and **Table 1** refer);
- 26.11 Note the revised "history of change" statement (paragraph 19 and **Annex 1 to Appendix 1** refer);

Customer Safety Plan 2021-2031

Working together towards a safer Kent and Medway



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service

together

Reading time target – 20 mins excluding annexes

Chair's introduction

Welcome to Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority's Customer Safety Plan. This Plan is different to ones you might have read before. We have thought in detail about what the future looks like, and what we think you, our customers, will need from us in the future. If you want to know how we have performed in the last year, we have published that on our website. Or look out for the next safety and wellbeing plan.

This Plan considers the longest timeframe ever we have ever attempted. We can't predict the future with certainty, but by looking at research, what our colleagues in other Services are thinking, and just talking to people, we think we can make some educated guesses.

Having looked at the future we have reviewed our aim and objectives from the last plan, and they remain a good reflection of what we want to do. We created six completely new strategies which start to respond to the challenges of the future over the coming four years. The plan introduces them, and has links so you can read the detail for yourself.

We hope you find this Plan easy to read. We hope it gives you a really clear idea of what we think a modern fire and rescue service should do for its customers.

Nick Chard

Chair – Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

About the next 10 years

This section sets out how we think the world might change in the next ten years or so. It shows how we have used this information to put together our strategies for the next four years.

To develop our plans we have considered our long term aim and objectives which are shown later in this plan. Assessing all the foreseeable changes on the horizon that could affect what we are able to deliver to our customers is really important to how we plan our activities for the coming years. To help us think what the future might look like we used the following sources:

- The National Fire Chief's Council's document "Fit for the Future"
- The National Police Chief's document "Police Futures"
- Any Standards published by the National Standards Board for Fire and Rescue Services
- The Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Plan
- Data from the Office of National Statistics, including census information
- Technology insights from Gartner, a world leading technology consultancy
- The national threat and risk assessment produced by the government
- The threat and risk assessment produced by the Kent and Medway Local Resilience Forum
- Our own "equality of access" research, which covers how communities interact with us, or not
- Our own data on incidents we have attended
- Our internal debrief from our activities during COVID
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services' annual "State of Fire" report, and outcomes of inspections they have conducted of us.
- Engagement across the organisation, capturing what everyone that works for us thinks the future holds
- Models from the inter-governmental panel on climate change and research reports they have published, and related work by Public Health England on health impacts
- Financial modelling for local authorities conducted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
- Published people impact assessments
- The government's [Brief Guide for Futures Thinking and Foresight](#) (Feb 2021)

This table highlights the emerging concerns and advances in our landscape which has shaped our strategies.

	Issue Identified	Impact on KFRS	Relevant Strategy
Changes in society			
A larger, older, more diverse population	UK population will grow by 2043 to be c72m - concentrated in cities. London is projected to be c10m by 2030 (up from c9m in 2018)	Increased population in Kent and Medway potentially changing service needs	Customer Safety and Engagement
	Approximately 22m people will be aged over 60 by 2039 – proportionally that means more than 0.5m in Kent and Medway	Potentially a higher proportion of the population within key risk groups, suggesting further investment in customer safety	Customer Safety and Engagement
	An increase in population diversity with the non-white share reaching c23%	More diverse customer needs. Potentially new groups to attract recruits from	Response and Resilience / Customer Safety and Engagement / People
	An increase in the number of one-person households (7.7m in 2011 to 10.7m in 2039)	Potentially a higher proportion of the population within key risk groups, suggesting further investment in customer safety	Customer Safety and Engagement
Inequality & social fragmentation	Life expectancy gap between the richest and poorest areas in Kent and Medway likely to increase from its current 11 year gap.	Potentially a higher proportion of the population within key risk groups, suggesting further investment in customer safety	Customer Safety and Engagement
	Rising unemployment (particularly amongst younger and older age groups).	Potential impact on nuisance fire calls (grassland fires, deliberate fires). Increased levels of application for firefighter and other vacancies	Response and Resilience / People
	A widening gap widening between rich and poor in UK especially in terms of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wealth Education Digital exclusion 	Potentially a higher proportion of the population within key risk groups, suggesting further investment in customer safety	Customer Safety and Engagement

	Issue Identified	Impact on KFRS	Relevant Strategy
	<p>The global pandemic [and any future variants] could change the profile of deprivation and health across the Kent and Medway, leading to pressure on existing public services.</p> <p>New and emerging communities in Kent and Medway have different needs and differing expectations of public services</p>	<p>Changes to home/office working patterns could have a positive impact on on-call availability</p> <p>More diverse customer needs. Potentially new groups to attract recruits from</p>	<p>People</p> <p>Customer Safety and Engagement / People</p>
Built environment	<p>Local authorities will be under increased pressure to release land for housing to keep pace with new patterns of demand</p> <p>Major transport infrastructure projects are likely in the south east to improve onwards connectivity</p> <p>Major infrastructure projects such as London Resort will change demand and transport infrastructure</p> <p>In a post Grenfell environment there will be a significant and continued focus on audit and inspection of buildings by the Authority</p> <p>Low lying existing developments may be subject to more frequent flooding due to climate change</p> <p>Town centres and major urban areas may experience extreme summertime temperatures, impacting on public health</p> <p>A continued move away from the high street to online shopping creating empty spaces in town centres. Empty commercial properties in town</p>	<p>Increased population in Kent and Medway potentially changing service needs</p> <p>Potential changes to quickest routes to incidents. Short term transport disruption</p> <p>Potential changes to quickest routes to incidents. Short term transport disruption</p> <p>Continued investment in business safety and their skills and development</p> <p>Increased demand for flood and rescues, potentially leading to a statutory duty for fire and rescue services</p> <p>Increased demand for medical emergency calls in town centres</p> <p>Changes to firefighting tactics and anticipated building behaviour for initial incident commanders</p>	<p>Customer Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Response and Resilience</p> <p>Response and Resilience</p> <p>People/ Customer Safety and Engagement</p> <p>Response and Resilience</p> <p>Response and Resilience</p> <p>Response and Resilience / Customer Safety and Engagement / People</p>

	Issue Identified	Impact on KFRS	Relevant Strategy
	centres increasingly being converted quickly to residential property		
	Methods of home insulation using petrochemicals changes fire behaviour when compartments are breached – this becomes a more frequent occurrence	Changes to firefighting tactics and anticipated building behaviour for initial incident commanders	Response and Resilience / People
	An increase in solar farms as fossil fuel technology becomes obsolete	Changes to firefighting tactics and anticipated site behaviour for initial incident commanders	Response and Resilience / People
The environment			
Climate change, environmental decline and competition for resources	The impact of global warming becomes globally obvious. Demand and competition for many natural resources, including food, water, energy and rare earth materials becomes increasingly unsustainable.	Materials of improvements to the estate rise in price. Energy prices rise	Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement
	The amounts and frequency of rainfall will change. There will be increased local flooding with more flash flooding occurring, putting increased pressure on infrastructure, water resources and local economies.	Increased demand for flood and rescues, potentially leading to a statutory duty for fire and rescue services	Response and Resilience
	Severe weather events such as droughts, heat waves, flooding, severe gales and snowfall are likely to increase. In the longer term, extreme weather may affect where people live, work and spend their leisure time.	Increased demand for medical emergency and water rescue calls	Response and Resilience
	Heightened risk of wildfires and the consequent impact on bio-diversity.	Increased demand for grassland and wildfire incidents, which tend to be protracted incidents	Response and Resilience

	Issue Identified	Impact on KFRS	Relevant Strategy
	<p>Rising demand for technologies such as wind turbines and electric cars will cause demand for rare earth elements to increase.</p> <p>There are emerging risks of fire in new technology such as mass battery storage sites.</p>	<p>Materials of improvements to the estate rise in price. Energy prices rise</p> <p>Changes to firefighting tactics</p>	<p>Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement</p> <p>Response and Resilience / People / Customer Engagement and Safety</p>
Technology			
Harnessing artificial intelligence	<p>Increasing numbers of autonomous robots, cars, lorries, boats and aircraft. Artificial intelligence increasingly capable of processing, analysing and making decisions from real world data without human involvement/intervention</p> <p>Artificial intelligence could provide first responders with a better understanding of community dynamics. Major incident commanders could use artificial intelligence systems to improve situational awareness and better visualise potential strategies and tactics</p>	<p>Long-term opportunity to remove need to commit firefighters inside buildings to extinguish fires and use technology solutions instead. Remote analysis of incidents and response levels required may be possible</p> <p>Improvements to simulations and virtual reality capability to be more realistic.</p>	<p>Response and Resilience/ Business Change, Information and Technology, Commercial and Procurement</p> <p>Business Change, Information and Technology / People</p>
Technological change and convergence	<p>Connectivity, processing power and the volume and variety of data grows exponentially to 2040, with 'next generation' technologies (Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, biotechnology and Quantum technologies)</p> <p>A rise in sophisticated and personally targeted misinformation and fake news</p> <p>The Covid crisis highlighted the Digital Divide with many households unable to access digital information (e.g. for home schooling). Access to high speed internet becomes an inclusion issue.</p>	<p>Better and more seamless integration of data held and data shared between partners. Changes to data protection law post EU Exit would need to be responded to.</p> <p>Our brand may potentially be damaged by a targeted attack using our name</p> <p>We cannot really entirely on technology channels to ensure equality of access</p>	<p>Business Change, Information and Technology</p> <p>Customer Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Customer Engagement and Safety</p>

	Issue Identified	Impact on KFRS	Relevant Strategy
	<p>Technology based solutions develop to tackle social isolation such as chatbots, virtual reality, carer robots and social media to provide both real and virtual companionship. People hanker after real human contact still, but opportunities become more limited</p> <p>Diesel power phased out by 2030 for new purchases, leading to the development of alternatively powered vehicles for emergency services. Consideration of replacement of fixed and moveable diesel generators.</p> <p>Carbon and heat capture schemes become more affordable and prevalent</p>	<p>Developments to our digital platform to facilitate remote home safety advice provision in a virtual face to face way</p> <p>Large changes to the fleet and fixed generator capabilities</p> <p>Ongoing investment in green schemes in line with the Carbon Action Plan</p>	<p>Business Change, Information and Technology Customer Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement</p> <p>Assets and Environmental Improvement</p>
Political			
Political landscape	<p>A move towards elected mayors and different forms of local government, creating uncertainty and change</p> <p>New legislation relating to the built environment, a new equality act, and changes to data protection legislation in a post EU Exit environment</p> <p>A potential decline as technology changes over 10 to 20 years in traditional core activity for fire and rescue services (fires and road traffic collisions)</p> <p>National negotiating machinery for pay and conditions of service for firefighters are likely to be reformed.</p>	<p>A potential change of governance model within the foreseeable future</p> <p>Requirements to update our framework of policies</p> <p>A policy shift towards transforming to a community support agency covering life threatening emergencies, flooding, medical support, logistics, and a regular community visit programme to the most vulnerable whilst maintaining high quality emergency response</p> <p>A period of disruption for the workforce</p>	<p>Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement</p> <p>Response and Resilience / Customer Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Response and Resilience / People</p>

	Issue Identified	Impact on KFRS	Relevant Strategy
	Grant funding from government may change. Some functions we provide are grant funded	We may need to look to absorb the cost of grant funded services into our day to day budget	Medium Term Financial Plan
Economic Transitions	The UK faces a prolonged period of weak economic growth and strained public finances. Post-Brexit economic realignment could take several years. Access to markets, labour, suppliers and parts for servicing becomes more expensive in the short term, with no clarity on the long term impacts.	Continued pressure to deliver value for money Cyclical and programmed maintenance costs increase	Medium Term Financial Plan / all strategies Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement
	The ability to raise tax from a diminishing working age population becomes harder. Conversely, the council tax base may rise with more single person households	The need to model a range of financial scenarios	Medium Term Financial Plan
	Pressure on pension funds, especially in unfunded schemes, becomes increasingly unsustainable	A period of disruption for the workforce	Response and Resilience / People

Our aim and objectives

Working together, saving lives, reducing harm

We are Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

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 people in their homes, where they work and in places of education to help keep them safe – whoever they are.

We are there for our customers in times of need – whether it's a fire, a road crash or a water rescue.

Every one of us helps to save lives. We are one team. Together, we are Kent Fire and Rescue Service.



Our vision

Helping everyone to be safer by working towards a future where no one is killed or seriously injured by a fire or other emergency

Our aim

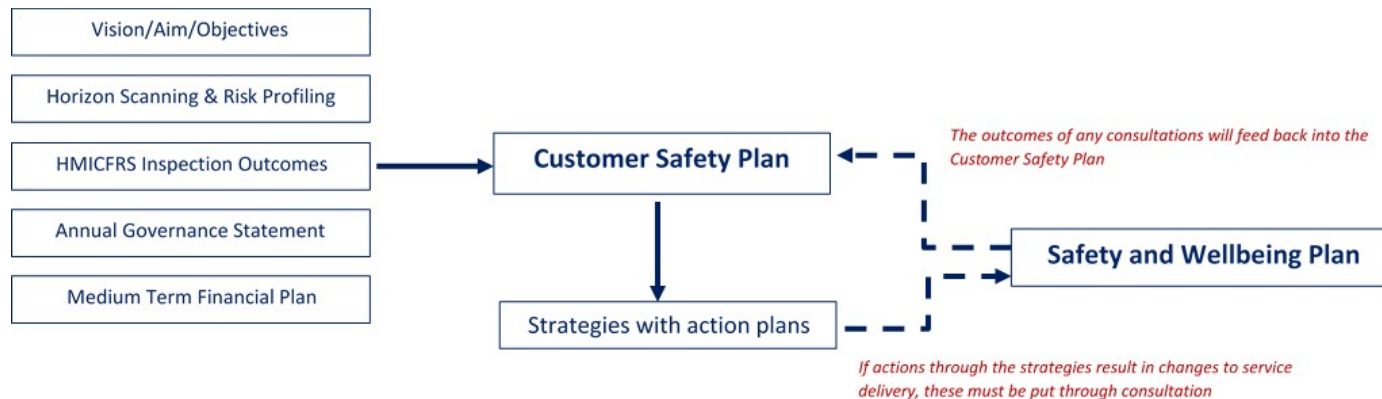
Working together, saving lives, reducing harm

We provide a wide range of services to our customers, whether in their homes, on the roads or out and about in the community, by assisting to bring about behaviour change and providing a high quality, rapid operational response. These services are grouped together under our five objectives:

- Responding effectively in times of customer need;
- Promoting behaviours which help you stay safe and well in your home;
- Encouraging you to adopt behaviours which keep you safe on the roads;
- Supporting businesses to help people to stay safe in their buildings and comply with legislation;
- Helping you and the broader community to stay safe from harm caused by accidents, natural events or people intending harm.

How does it all fit together?

The Customer Safety Plan is a key part of our planning cycle. It works across a four year period, but all the information and plans are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain current and fit for purpose. We look to the future, at the changes we can anticipate, and we look what the government expects of us. And we talk to our customers and our partners about what they need from us. All this is contained within a budget which we consult on annually, so that we can set our proportion of the Council Tax.



What do we want to achieve?

Underpinning all that we do are a number of themes. These “golden threads” underpin all our thinking. The threads are:

- **Operational excellence – being the best we can be**
- **Inclusion – everyone together**
- **Wellbeing – we care about everyone that works for us**
- **Efficiency and value for money**

Operational excellence – being the best we can be

To respond to emergencies effectively we need our stations in the best possible locations with the right number of people, at the right time, with the right skills and tactical options available to them. Information gathered after an emergency is used to improve procedures, equipment and training. Customer feedback is used wherever possible, to improve our response in the future.

What we have been developing is a better focus on ensuring people’s needs are at the centre of our response and how we evaluate if we are good. We aim to reduce harm in every situation through work during and after the incident. This starts with our call-handling team and ends with post-incident care, advice and support, and learning from incidents through debriefs.

We are introducing an approach, known as the Integrated Learning and Assurance Model, to ensure we have an effective, assertive, and safe operational workforce, that has been tested as competent, and is licenced to respond to a variety of emergencies and situations that affect our customers whilst keeping our sites in Kent and Medway safer. This approach pulls together all the elements of learning and assurance exercises to deliver an integrated approach to our professional practice. It also

integrates our work in high risk sites and our requirements to meet Section 7.2(d) of the Fire Services Act in a cohesive way. We want to help individuals maintain confidence in their skills. The elements of the new model are:

- Learning from incidents, exercises and training events
- Social and blended learning
- Core refresher training which is maintained as a training record as part of a regular assessment of competence to practice
- Station based training against the current 26 National Operational Guidance scenarios.
- Station based activity such as home fire safety visits, tactical assessment visits, formal exercising and testing
- Service-wide assurance exercises
- Conferences on new research and ways of working available to all and continuous professional development

The model is part of our drive to demonstrate we are a professional organisation and is supported by initiatives such as membership of the Institute of Fire Engineers and access to online learning for operational teams. Relevant qualifications, continuous professional development and professional memberships for building safety, customer safety and corporate colleagues with use of online learning are vital to the overall governance and performance of the Service. Our priority operationally for the next four years is consolidating all the above into day to day business.

Inclusion – everyone together

Providing excellent services to all our customers, whoever they are, is core to who we are. We strive to ensure equality of access to our services for everyone, including people living here temporarily and anyone who travels through Kent and Medway.

We are also committed to the principle of equality for everyone who works and volunteers for us. We do this by ensuring inclusion, supporting and representing all our teams. Valuing diversity is not just a moral obligation, it is essential to what we do and our success. Without diversity and difference, including people who think differently, we would not be Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

Through our experience and research, we know the importance of giving support to customers at greater risk of fire, including people living with dementia, with mobility challenges or mental health concerns. We also recognise, however, that barriers such as language, beliefs, societal factors, and perceived prejudices may prevent customers from accessing our services such as safe and well home visits or from reporting small fires in the home. Through targeted engagement and using different approaches, we aim to reach specific groups who may be unaware of, or choose not to access, our services. By doing this, we can ensure we provide equality of access.

As a public service, we recognise the legal duty we have to everyone in Kent and Medway. As well as this duty however, the commitment of everyone who works and volunteers here in helping and protecting all our customers goes to the very heart of who we are and what we do.

We are determined to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations with everyone. In recent years society has progressed in terms of inclusion and greater recognition of the benefits of a more diverse community. We recognise, however, that we need to do more and are working to:

- improve access and remove barriers to all of our services for every one of our customers.
- ensure all of our customers' experiences of our service is excellent.
- become an employer of choice and a great place to volunteer, where people feel a sense of belonging and can thrive

We aim to do this by:

Embracing difference – when designing or reviewing services we will make sure everyone can access them whenever they need to. Everyone is different and as an organisation embracing difference, we will strive to remove the barriers that customers experience, whether they are tangible such as language or mobility challenges, or perceptual, including fear or cultural barriers.

Diversity in decision-making - there is a positive link between organisational diversity and innovative performance. This means that when teams involve people from different backgrounds – whether demographic or functional – creativity and problem solving increases. We aim to make decisions by working with, and gathering information, from diverse teams with different backgrounds, abilities and a difference in thinking.

Inclusive recruitment - We actively encourage people from under-represented groups to join us. We focus on the strengths and needs of every one of our colleagues including our volunteers, supporting and encouraging them to thrive and perform at their best. All colleagues from different backgrounds with specific needs or support will be fully consulted and where possible lead conversations, discussions and developments relating to any changes in policy that may affect them.

Incorporating intersectionality into our work

Everyone has multiple identities and can be affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. This led to the concept of intersectionality and the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination.

For us this means acknowledging and understanding that we all have multiple identities that intersect to make us who we are. These can include race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, age and ethnicity. Intersectionality helps us to understand about oppressions and privileges that overlap and reinforce each other. Allowing us to understand and accept that life is not the same for everyone – even for people who share identity characteristics. By acknowledging and embracing intersectionality we have a better opportunity to understand the importance of these differences and how they overlap. This in turn influences areas of our organisation, services and behaviours that may help or harm us, based on who we and our customers are.

As a public service we must be aware of anything that can marginalise people and understand that it is the voices of the most marginalised that are often silenced.

We purposefully aim for greater diversity in leadership and in our teams, while working with partners and charities who focus on marginalised groups across Kent and Medway.

For example:

- in Thanet and Medway we partner with other public services as part of a 'task force' with the shared aim of improving the lives of diverse communities living together, making customers safer and reducing crime in the area.
- throughout Kent and Medway we partner with the 'BeYou Project' providing safe and non-judgemental spaces to connect young lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary or questioning people to meet, socialise and help each other.

Each of our projects and service developments must consider issues of intersectionality. We strive for an inclusive customer experience, which involves listening so that we can match services to the needs of all our customers.

Making accessibility 'our business'

It is important to us and what we do that we ensure equality of access to services and employment. To enable this we must continue to prioritise our engagement with customers across Kent and Medway to build up a comprehensive customer risk profile. We need to identify and assess current, emerging and future changes around risk. We also need to recognise that people have very different issues and needs. Building grassroots engagement with our customer groups through our collaboration team, our building safety team, and fire station is key to helping people in their homes, where they work, and in places of education to help keep them safe.

Examples of how we are doing this include:

- ensuring our prevention activity, such as work and research with Gypsy and traveller communities and the Roma hubs, is conducted with pride in terms of care and addressing our accessibility.
- ensuring home fire safety visits are focused on the people most at risk. It is vital that we increase access to safe and well home visits and home fire safety visits so everyone feels comfortable accessing these life-saving services.
- we will enhance the work around operational response ensuring we consider and meet the needs of different people.
- to ensure that the training we provide has inclusive considerations both in the delivery and content of the training.

- we are triangulating real time activity at incidents with progressing our learning through our ops assurance model.

Inclusion is something we all care about – together.

Wellbeing – we care about everyone that works for us

We have a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure as far as reasonably practicable the health safety and welfare of everyone that works for us. But to us wellbeing is more than that; wellbeing is fundamental to being able to deliver the outstanding service for our customers that we are striving for.

Whilst the responsibility for managing physical and mental health rests with each individual, we recognise the role we can play as an organisation to support and have introduced a range of resources. Everyone is encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle in order to be fit and healthy to perform their roles. We are committed to providing a healthy rewarding working environment where everyone is motivated to perform their role and responsibilities effectively to achieve our objectives. We recognise this is dependent on many factors which are often interconnected and therefore we promote a holistic and proactive approach to wellbeing.

Mental health, like physical health, can fluctuate on a spectrum of good to bad. Mental health problems can affect the way people think, feel or behave. In some cases this can seriously limit a person's ability to cope with day to day life, which can impact on relationships, work and quality of life. In most cases mental health problems are caused by a combination of problems individuals face at work and outside of work. It is therefore impossible to disentangle the impact of various factors on mental health and so it is in the employer's interest to actively support those with mental health problems whatever the original cause or trigger.

Wellbeing has many aspects and ranges through physical health, mental health, making adjustments for appropriate work life balance.

The duties we carry out at operational incidents might mean exposure to potentially traumatising experiences. It is not possible to identify every category which has the potential to give rise to reactions following being involved in traumatic incidents. These are

personal to each individual and is why resources are accessible to everyone 24 hours day 7 days a week. However we have categorised incidents where the potential is higher, and when these incidents occur the defusing process is triggered and comprises of two levels depending on the requirement of the specific incident.

As an organisation we have recently signed up to the Mental Health at Work Commitment - a simple framework building on what we already know: based on the Thriving at Work standards and incorporating current research from mental health experts in the field and UK employers. By signing up to the commitment we are publicly declaring and showing that supporting mental health is a priority.

Efficiency and value for money

We have always demonstrated good financial management and governance, as shown by both external and internal audit reporting. Nonetheless, the tightening fiscal landscape has placed the finances of some fire and rescue services (and other local authorities) under intense pressure. Good financial management is an essential element of good governance and something which underpins our planning.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy – who are the professional institute for accountants working in the public services and other bodies where public money needs to be managed – has issued the ‘Financial Management Code’ which is based on six core principles:

- **Organisational leadership** – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into the organisational culture.
- **Accountability** – based on medium-term financial planning that drives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
- Financial management is undertaken with **transparency** as its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer action and elected member decision making.
- Adherence to professional **standards** is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.

- Sources of **assurance** are recognised as an effective tool mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, internal audit and inspection
- The long-term **sustainability** of local services is at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.

We strive to deliver value for money in all its forms. This does not mean always accepting the lowest price, and the social value ethos of potential suppliers is also taken into account. Throughout our strategies are examples of ways we will look for value for money, through broadening the range of services we provide, to changing how we use our fleet and buildings, and how we buy goods and services. We have also published an efficiency statement which is available on our website. This contains much more detail on how we have achieved value for money in the last year.

How do we achieve what we plan to do?

We refresh our corporate strategies every four years, using the analysis of what the future holds, our aim and objectives, and our key themes. The strategies set out our aims over that period and what we would like to achieve in specific areas. They all contain elements of the themes introduced above, showing how they are embedded in all we do.

Each strategy follows a similar template, with an introduction, what has been achieved, and then a look forward to what we want to do next. Below is a summary of the key outcomes we want to deliver in each strategy. It is not every aim – and there is far more detail in each strategy, including how we will know if the strategy is on track to be delivered.

The strategies are [links to be added when published]

- Response and resilience
- Customer engagement and safety
- People
- Assets and environmental improvement
- Business change, information and technology
- Commercial and procurement

The links between the supporting strategies and the services delivered to our customers are largely self-explanatory. Without a fire engine, which has been specified, bought, placed in a fire station, filled with fuel and crewed with trained firefighters, and a system to tell these firefighters there is an incident they need to deal with, there is no fire and rescue service.

These strategies are more inwardly-focused than the response and resilience, and customer engagement and safety strategies. This is because they are mainly for use by members of staff to understand what action will be taken and when, or when these supplies will be bought and changes will be made. Nonetheless, we've written them in as non-technical a way as possible.

Response and resilience

Ensure what we do is driven by an understanding of risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we understand all the reasonably foreseeable risks our customers face and prioritise our activities accordingly • Identify emerging or changing risks, such as those posed by new technologies or climate change, and take action to be able to mitigate harm • Use an assessment of risk to identify where we may be able to help partner agencies with responding to those in need • Ensure the activities we undertake actively contribute to driving down the impact of emergencies
Further evolve our ability to respond to different customer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed people impact assessments into the way we plan for, develop, and implement improvements to the service we provide to customers. • Use our understanding of risk to drive improvements to the quality of our service, and strive to ensure we exceed customer expectations • Work with partners to seek opportunities to deliver more activities that provide better customer outcomes • Provide guidance, training and resources to our colleagues to understand how to adapt what they do to the needs of individual customers
Always be ready to respond with the right skills and equipment, aligned to National Guidance, supported by a range of tactical options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond with the right people who have the necessary skills and equipment to implement the most effective tactical options • Constantly review the location of our resources according to risk, demand and isolation, using systems that allow us to get to customers as quickly as we can • Be more able to flex our resources to respond to changes in demand and major incidents • Ensure the training we deliver is aligned to National Guidance in order to deliver operational excellence and improve the safety of customers and colleagues • Use improvements in technology to enable our colleagues to deliver the best outcome • Improve our capability for reducing the impact of incidents on the environment
Actively seek opportunities to improve what we do, against clear standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure what we do against published national fire standards and the standards expected by our customers. A culture of exceeding these standards will be implemented to support a high quality of response. • Use data from across the Service, including customer feedback, to identify trends and proactively assess the quality of the service we provide, making changes to improve our response

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop an environment where colleagues feel able to identify problems and best practice which we all learn from • Further develop our operational assurance reporting to constantly assess “how good are we?” • Use findings from significant incidents, prevention of future death reports, and inquiries, both nationally and internationally, to improve our service
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Customer engagement and safety

Matching services to needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to all of our services • Increased customer insight to improve our services • Tailored services designed to meet the needs of all our customers, whoever they are • Using the latest technology to engage with customers through targeted campaigns
A safer built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the safety of buildings through targeted and effective auditing and consultations • Use smart, connected technology to make buildings safer • Explore and implement new technology to enable effective mobile working
Preventing and minimising harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create tailored prevention products and services through partnerships • Improve our education services to make customers safer • Embed effective behavioural change methods and messages in all our work • Develop new road safety, water safety and arson prevention services with partners

People

The People Plan has 6 key objectives. These objectives have been developed in consultation with colleagues across KFRS. We are using the People Maturity models to help us identify gaps against accepted best practice and to keep measuring benefits and improvements.

The 6 objectives are:

1. To attract, identify, retain and develop high performing employees in order to best serve our customer

4. To develop and support the growth of leaders to facilitate transformational change

2. To enable the development of high - performance culture in which everyone is supported, rewarded, developed and managed effectively

5. Embed a supportive culture which is inclusive, positive, and fair which enables people to reach their potential.

3. Together continue to cultivate an environment of positive health and good wellbeing, where people are engaged and valued for what they do.

6. To support a work environment which promotes flexibility and harnesses the benefits of using the latest technology

To support the delivery of these objectives we have identified 7 key areas of work:

Activity	Description
Data	To improve collection and use of data to support workforce development. Creating business focused analysis of data to identify trends, areas for improvement and support performance
Sense of belonging	To further develop our workplace to support well-being, improve employee engagement and eliminate bias or prejudice specifically in recruitment and promotion processes
Employee Experience	To promote diversity of thinking, encourage a culture of open debate, creativity and collective problem solving. To take the next steps towards engagement/participation so there is joint ownership of change
Leadership	To continue to advance our leaders as role models who promote a culture of inclusion, professionalism and ownership. Through a coaching and continuous dialogue feedback enable everyone to have a voice, own their learning and focus on customer needs
Talent & Career Management	To enhance our current processes so that they support effective workforce planning and provide a variety of opportunities for all colleagues to develop their potential
Learning Environment	To support the learning of all by expanding our blended learning approach, building on professionalism and encouraging individual ownership of learning
Contractual flexibility	To explore how contractual flexibility could promote and encourage greater empowerment, support improved well-being and attract a greater diversity of applicants.

Assets and environmental improvement

Improve the working experience on our fire stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a programme of refurbishment and improvement to all our fire stations • Continue to minimise any contamination at fire stations by particulates when firefighters return from incidents • Embed inclusion and dignity at work in all property works
Respond to the post COVID world by reconfiguring the office and training estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace the live fire training facility at Ashford • Consider our options for the existing Maidstone site • Reconfigure the Godlands building and Rochester fire station
Use technology and data to better manage, and make more efficient use of, our fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with suppliers to encourage innovation in the design of new more environmentally friendly fire and carbon efficient engines • Consider a “make ready” site for fire engines • Utilise data to better inform decisions about the way we use our fleet
Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 • Change the behaviour of everyone that works for us to be “paperfree” by default • Improve the energy efficiency of our buildings
Improve how we manage our contracts and suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate our contracts into fewer, bigger contracts for major works and repairs • Invest in a property management system • Deliver a better way of managing servicing for our smaller vehicles

Business change, information and technology

Deliver Business Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fully align our portfolio management processes to the budget development cycle and Service governance.• Develop the Business Change function to improve management of the Portfolio of Projects, Project Delivery, Business Analysis and Customer Engagement.• Focus project scope to align to 'minimum viable product' concept to ensure resources are targetted to strategically important tasks.
Transforming Customer Service Through Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relocate our 999 Control Room and implement the latest technology including multi-agency incident transfer arrangements.• Prepare for the Emergency Services Network.• Exploit our risk management system fully by using it to manage more processes.• Improve incident ground communications, data capture and sharing.
Developing the Next Generation of System Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain pace with supplier roadmaps, utilising new features as they become available.• Replace systems which are not fit for purpose.• Enable mobile working.
Maintaining Highly Available and Secure Technology Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake upgrades and patching processes to reduce the risk of a cyber attack.• Continue to move services to the cloud, reducing the burden on IT resources.• Support new hybrid working, enabling colleagues to work from anywhere.• Continue to use data securely and ethically.

Commercial and procurement

To provide continuous support and guidance for all procurement and commercial matters, including access to market intelligence to support our business cases and purchasing decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve the quality of statements of needs published to the market • Include whole-life costs in decision making on all purchasing • Encourage pre-market engagement where this will get us a better product or service
To provide access to innovative products and services to support the evolving and diverse nature of services to our customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the category management approach to our spend • Continue to work with partners and other agencies to purchase collaboratively • Continue to maintain an indepth and up to date knowledge of our markets
To continue to be transparent in ongoing and future procurement activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to publish all information required under the government transparency code for local government • Reduce the number of purchases made without a competitive process • Always maintain a published pipeline of future purchases
To provide fit for purpose goods and services available to the front-line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always engage with users in all procurements • Regularly seek feedback on the products and services we have purchased • Continue to effectively manage our contracts as a whole to ensure quality and performance is maintained
To consider inclusion and social value considerations in all procurement opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the social value contribution our suppliers can make as well as value for money and publicise how we worked with suppliers to deliver such initiatives. • Continue to publish all opportunities to suppliers in an open and transparent way • Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion impacts are factored into all procurements and contract management processes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to diversify our supply chains, to ensure opportunities for our business are accessible by newer, smaller and innovative suppliers.
To continue to support our local community through implementation of the Modern Slavery Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a transparency in supply statement annually • Review the training provided to everyone that works for us on modern slavery to keep pace with new and emerging customer needs • Raise awareness locally and nationally about the need for effective due diligence and ethics in procurement

How we ensure success?

We will monitor the delivery of each strategy. Over and above that, we have selected a suite of performance indicators which will form the basis of a “balanced scorecard”, drawing from all the strategies and other measures we use. This will be used to give assurance to all that we are delivering what we promise in this plan.

The balanced scorecard for the start of 2021/22 is shown in the table below. It was developed through engagement with an expert in value for money assessments and shared with other fire and rescue services nationally. It will be refreshed every year in line with current issues faced by the Service.

Economy perspective

- % spend against the annual budget
- Receipt of the Auditors statement of assurance
- Unqualified accounts achieved for the previous financial year
- % spend of capital funding
- % spend of infrastructure revenue funding

Efficiency perspective

- % of operational colleagues in qualification in key skills
- % of shifts lost to sickness
- Availability of fire engines compared to stated requirement
- % of life-threatening 999 calls where the first fire engine was in attendance within 10 minutes

Effectiveness perspective

Prevention

- LPI 107 Smoke Alarms Fitted But Did Not Activate
- LPI 108 No Smoke Alarm Fitted
- LPI 200 Safe & Well and Home Fire Safety Visits

Protection

- LPI 300 - Building Consultations Completed
- LPI – Number of Audits completed
- LPI – Ratio of high risk audits (Target 80%)
- LPI 302 Alleged Fire Safety Concerns responded to within 24 hours

Operations

- LPI 100 - All Fires
- Fatalities (accidental)
- LPI 120 – Turnout Times
- LPI 148 Severity of Accidental Dwelling Fires
- Emergency Medical Response (Co-Responding)

Corporate/Customer perspective

- Completion of an annual survey of everyone that works or us on a key issue (eg culture or wellbeing)
- Report on the data breaches reportable to the Office of the Information Commissioner we have recorded
- % of freedom of information requests responded to within 20 working days
- No of complaints received
- Transparency in Supply Chains statement published
- Availability of the core IT network
- % disclosure of EDI characteristics by staff group

Annex 1: history of change

History of Change

We have undergone considerable changes over the lifetime of the previous Customer Safety Plan. The key changes and developments are set out below.

2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work starts on designing and drafting the new Customer and Corporate Plan 2018-2022.• Recruited 21 wholetime firefighters – the first such recruitment since 2007.• New fire station opened in Chatham.• Maintained emergency medical response capability from the majority of on-call sections and a number of wholetime sections.• Roll out of flexible rostering to Dartford, Thames-side, Tunbridge Wells, Dover, Folkestone and Ashford.• Building work started on the new fire station at Ramsgate.• Introduced improved desktop terminal devices and software across the Service.• Maintained “Excellent” status in the Local Government Association equality framework.• Achieved Kent Dementia Friendly employer of the year.• We made a corporate commitment alongside Kent Police to support the White Ribbon Campaign.
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruited a second cohort of 24 wholetime firefighters.• Completed the move to flexible rostering.• Rolled out response to medical emergencies by on-call crews• Invested in new operational assets to improve our capabilities.• Created a new team to focus solely on the On-call section.• New Customer and Corporate Plan 2018-2022 published. Delivery of this underpinned by eight strategies. Two of the strategies (Community Safety and Engagement) are outwardly focussed. The other six (Operational Response, Procurement, Performance and Data, Assets, IT and Business Change, and People) focussed primarily on internal processes essential for the delivery of an effective and efficient fire and rescue service.• Embedding the concept of ‘customer’ in the Service. Developing the Customer Advocate Programme.• Consolidated our support for mental health and well-being, culture change and embedded the ‘Think Contaminants’ project.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivation of talent pipeline and future leaders. • Restructured middle management layer to bring resource into projects and new Station Leaders following restructure of station leadership teams. • National lead on procurement (PPE, workwear and training).
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramsgate fire station officially opened, replacing the previous fire station which had been in operation since 1905. • EU exit planning successfully implemented. • Customer and Corporate Plan refreshed and underpinning strategies reviewed to ensure that they remain suitable. • Wide-ranging restructure of the Community Safety and Technical Fire Safety teams undertaken. The two departments were renamed Customer Safety and Building Safety respectively and we implemented an investment programme to allow the teams to deliver the aims of the Community Safety strategy. • Creation of a new Collaboration Team (following restructure) to lead on delivering collaboration activities efficiently and economically, whilst making sure benefits could be tracked and evaluated. • The Customer Experience and Behaviour Change Team (also created as part of the restructure) implemented the framework and methodology for behaviour change, using customer insight and research to develop safety programmes that ensure customers' needs are put first. • New wellbeing manager role created and dedicated Wellbeing Zone set up on our intranet. • Year one of national operational guidance project fully delivered. • Set up of complex buildings programme and externally created baseline survey. • Introduction of Stairwell Protection Teams and smoke hoods. • Creation of central Risk Reduction Team centralising risk data. • Pilot of safe and well visits in high risk premises. • Station Leader model embedded and joint work on development of stations underway. • New station plans created by fire stations. • Work completed on full analysis of our actions against prevention of future death notices. • Work started on review of training with workshops with crews leading to an integrated model of learning. • Further progress and delivery on our 'Think Contaminants' project to protect firefighters. • People impact assessments for four core activities created and opened up for consultation across the sector. • Leadership framework and new leadership curriculum being implemented along with leadership programme for Crew Managers. • Leadership conference held all managers (including Station Leaders) leading to new thinking on a number of issues. • Co-design of promotion questions for all staff shared with fire sector.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding training completed by all staff • Continued to move on from appraisal to an approach centred on high performance coaching. • Recognition of the FRSA (Fire and Rescue Services Association, formerly called the Retained Firefighters' Union). • Network and data security improved through removal of password reset and introduction of three new words. • Improvements to our maternity and paternity provision. • Carry out 'Feeling Valued' survey with full results given to staff and actions taken forward. • ACAS commissioned to ensure we are doing all we can to support staff in relation to bullying. • Wellbeing continues with work on trauma release • Work with Kent Autistic Trust leads to improve the Service's support for customers with autism. KFRS's approach shared with the sector. • Schools education programme overhauled and improved in consultation with schools. • New format station open days found to be hugely successful. • Support 'BeYou' project for LGBTQ+ young people at fire stations. • We accept the invitation of the HeForShe campaign for men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a visible and united force for gender equality (referred to as 'Men and Women as Allies'). • 'Ten from Len' safe and well campaign with Len Goodman launched.
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 24 March, the multi-agency Strategic Coordination Group declared the coronavirus pandemic to be a major incident. In response to the pandemic, we undertook additional work which included: supporting SECamb with logistics and delivery of PPE to ambulance facilities across Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex and Surrey; making our Fleet Technicians available to assist with ambulance breakdowns; operational crews responding to falls in the home; supporting SECamb with testing equipment and PPE; releasing KFRS staff to undertake more supportive work to SECamb colleagues, and acting as the procurement hub for the provision of covid PPE to all 45 fire and rescue services in England. In addition, we assisted Kent County Council with the distribution of food parcels to the vulnerable and elderly, delivered meals for Age UK and provided pharmacies with support for delivery of prescriptions. • We declare a climate emergency and begin to develop a Carbon Action Plan to make KFRS carbon neutral by 2030. • We introduced our first 11 hybrid vehicles to the fleet. We aim that by 2030, 75% of our pool cars, vans and maintenance vehicles will be ultra-low emission or hybrid vehicles. • All vehicles in our fleet are now fitted with telemetry tracking systems allowing us to monitor mileage and engine idling time.

- New mobile data terminals installed on fire engines. New software under development to further improve their effectiveness.
- Operational groups reorganised into four sections: East Group, West Group, On-call Group, and Ops Readiness Group. The latter created to support the delivery of Station Based Training and provide management of operational establishment and sickness.
- 'Station Based Training' project implemented with the aim to provide operational personnel (including Fire Control Operators) with background knowledge of relevant National Operational Guidance as well as local risk based guidance.
- Folkestone becomes the first fire station in Kent to be a 'fire and ambulance response station'. Two ambulances are now based at Folkestone fire station and available to respond on a 24/7 basis.
- KFRS brand refreshed and rolled out internally bringing clarity to our brand identity and helping us to explain our beliefs and ambitions. Focus of the brand is 'Together', based on the idea of: KFRS as a great place to work – 'we are one team'; and KFRS working with customers to build a safer Kent and Medway.
- The Engagement team launch the 'Kent Together' campaign to identify resources and support to help people get through the coronavirus pandemic.
- Equality of access. Developed and published a range of national equality of access cases and shared them with the sector.
- In September, HMICFRS undertook an inspection of our response to the coronavirus pandemic (results to be published early 2021).
- July 2020, our updated Customer and Corporate Plan 2020-2024 was approved by the Fire Authority. The document was renamed the Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024 in line with our stated focus on the customer.
- December 2020, prior to their replacement a final update was presented to the Fire Authority on progress made to deliver the eight strategies of the Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024.
- This confirmed that over 70% of the activities within each strategy had already been completed or were being progressed. As a result, the Service is successfully working to deliver its stated aim and objectives.
- Embed processes to ensure that Small, Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Black Minority Enterprises (BMEs) bid for contracts without discriminating against larger firms.
- Roll out of a toolkit and evaluation template that can be adopted to ensure social value and social wellbeing can be accurately and realistically quantified and tracked throughout the life of new contracts.
- Publish our Code of Ethics, which is based on the Nolan Principles and clearly sets out the standards of ethical and professional behaviour we expect.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate policy refresh – more accessible format •
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New KFRS brand rolled out to external audiences across Kent and Medway. • Following the experience of flexible working during the pandemic, we commit to truly flexible working for office-based teams. • We publish our Modern Slavery Policy, which sets out our zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery, human trafficking and all forms of servitude and forced and compulsory labour in all our own business, commercial relationships, and any of our supply chains. • Initiated review of planning assumptions for emergency cover. Part of the process of ensuring that our cover continues to be as effective as possible. • Adopt the first four fire standards published by the Fire Standards Board (Emergency Response Driver Training, Operational Preparedness, Operational Competence and Operational Learning Fire Standards). • HMICFRS publish results of their inspection of our response to the coronavirus pandemic, stating that we adapted effectively and efficiently to the considerable demands that were imposed upon us by the pandemic and also recognising that we did so while maintaining our day-to-day service and fulfilling all of our statutory duties. • Lead on two national projects: the National Firefighting Specific Training Framework and the National Specialist PPE Framework. The former will deliver a route to market for all FRSs to procure their training service requirements to align with National Operational Guidance (NOG) training outcomes. • Purchase of new response cars undertaken through a collaborative approach with the Metropolitan Police. • Companion devices (tablets) to fire engine mobile data terminals rolled out to trial fire stations as part of a test of their effectiveness ahead of Service-wide roll out. • Green Forum established to oversee the Climate Action Plan and generate new ideas to drive change and achieve our goal of being carbon neutral by 2030. • Code of Ethics further updated and linked to the proposed Code of Ethics Fire Standard that has been drafted in partnership with the Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. As part of our commitment to the highest ethical standards, all colleagues are required to commit to this. • Two new NFCC work stream lead officers – Dir. Rist (Environment and climate change) and AM Deadman (Alternative fuels and energy systems) • Completed the National Operational Guidance project, resulting in the alignment of all KFRS operational policies to national guidance – the first FRS in the UK to do so. Supported other FRS across the UK with their efforts to implement, sharing what we had learnt and developed.

Annex 2: how we profile risk

The term risk can mean different things to different people and can often be used in a range of ways. We follow the definition that has been researched and recommended by the National Fire Chiefs Council Community Risk Project (<https://www.ukfrs.com/community-risk/defining-risk>).

Risk: A combination of the likelihood and consequences of hazardous events

Hazardous event A potential event that can cause harm

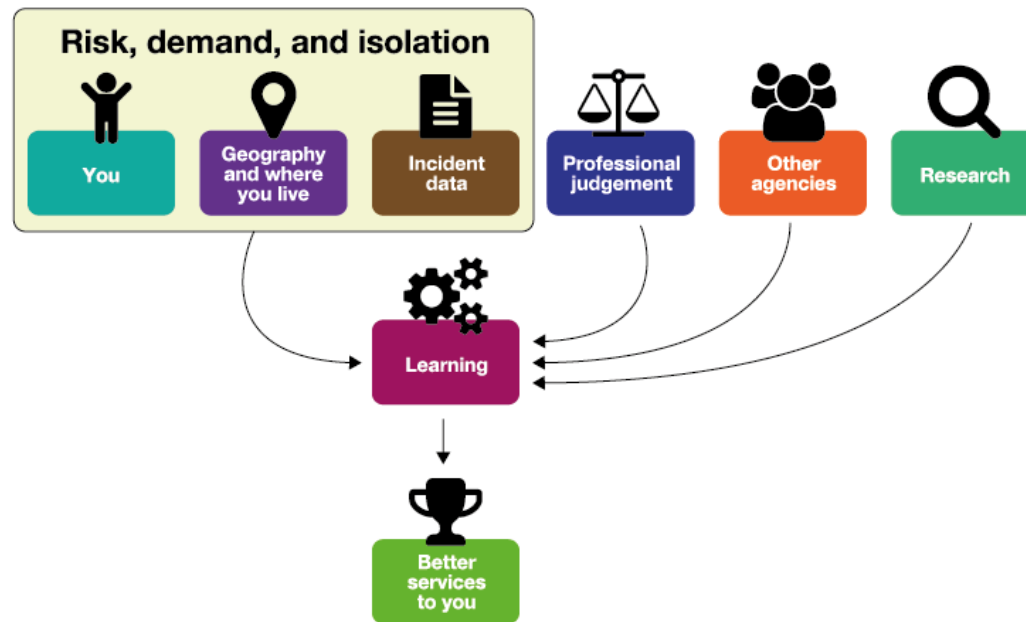
Likelihood The chance of something happening. May be described by the probability, frequency or uncertainty of events

Consequence The outcome of an event. Specifically the severity or extent of harm caused by an event

All fire services, by law, have to assess risks in their areas. To us however the process is not simply a legal requirement but a process that allows us deliver the excellent service to our customers that we are striving for. By getting the best possible understanding and assessment of public safety across Kent and Medway, and all the things that we think could reasonably predict happening that could cause injury or loss of property, allows us to focus our services and response in the areas of greatest need.

Risk profiling is part of our planning cycle, which works across a four year period, but the information is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose. The profiling of risk covers all three areas of response, prevention (largely our work in people's homes and on the roads) and protection (largely in business premises and residential homes with common spaces like landings, such as a high rise building). Common approaches and datasets are used to ensure consistency across the business.

There are many elements to this process, but these are not considered in isolation as individual elements, we bring them all together to understand how best to deliver our services. This document focuses on the risk, demand and isolation elements, primarily in relation to changes to front line emergency response but it will demonstrate how this links through all relevant teams in the organisation.



Risk

We need to establish how many people live in the area using census data. Using profiling data, we can assess how many people may have the needs we've identified in our impact assessments, and in what areas we might see certain groups of people. Some examples may be areas where we find more of one particular minority group who need additional support, or an area with a higher density of high-rise buildings. This helps us work out whether we need additional resources in certain areas.

We keep under review big questions such as population change and demographics. More people are living longer, but some have significant health issues.

Climate change is an area of concern for us as longer hotter summers lead to more outdoor fires. We also look at seasonal changes and how the risk may change in an area due to tourism or seasonal agricultural workers as examples.

How we profile risk of accidental fires in the home

We have developed our own statistical model over the last two years which provides us with the ability to estimate demographic risk in relation to accidental fires in the home. Using information available to us on the population in our area from Mosaic (a lifestyle profiling tool) alongside the most recent three years data on incidents and casualties allows us to segment and profile our customers and estimate the level of predicted risk of a fire in the home for each output area in Kent and Medway. An output area is a geographical area created for Census data collation and has on average 125 households within it.

The model is essentially a method by which an estimate of risk to life from a fire in the home is calculated and assigned to each of the 12 socio-demographic Mosaic Groups. This estimate is then apportioned to output areas based on the segmentation of households, providing an overall estimate of life risk in an output area (which can be aggregated to higher geographies). In addition the model will also indicate variations of the highest socio-demographic risk group in different areas. The model outputs can be used in more than one way, for example if we wanted to target a particular characteristic of a socio-demographic group we could filter on areas where they are the highest risk.

The model is refreshed on an annual basis and validation is carried out in the form of comparing actual incident data for the previous year to what the model predicted. The latest validation carried out found that on 70% of incidents, the Mosaic group of the household matched the two highest risk Mosaic groups the model predicted. Broadening the groups to include the highest three or four groups the model predicted, achieved a higher percentage still which suggests that targeting the high risk groups in areas where incidents have not yet happened is a proportionate approach to proactively targeting potential risk groups.

The benefit of this approach is it allows us to recognise and demonstrate knowledge of local diversity, rather than applying a blanket set of risk factors across the whole of Kent and Medway. Our previous approach was based on census data and numbers of lone pensioner and rented households, which had the limitation of not distinguishing between affluent or social lone pensioners or social/private rented households. Using Mosaic allows a greater level of granularity to profiling our demographic makeup of communities and updates are released annually resulting in a model that is more reflective of our communities.

We make sure that this information is utilised across the Service. Using the outputs of this model at Kent/Medway level, we take the highest risk groups into consideration for both reviewing where our fire engines are based and how quickly they can respond and for targeting where our firefighters carry out home safety visits in their local communities.

When we review the locations of our fire engines or how we crew them, we will use this model as one element of assessment. It will help us to identify if any areas where the risk (the likelihood and consequence of an event) of fire in the home is greater will be affected by the changes we are proposing. In an ideal world, we would be able to respond to an emergency across the whole area within a few minutes. In reality however, this would require a fire engine available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in every town and village, which is neither affordable nor proportionate to the risk. We do however have to ensure that any change to our emergency response does not put residents already at a high risk, at further risk and increase the consequence of an event due to an extension in our response.

We provide our firefighters with prioritised addresses to visit in their local areas in order to offer home fire safety visits to those considered at greater risk of a fire in the home. In order to do this, we identify addresses that have a Mosaic group that matches the top four highest risk groups across the county or addresses that are provided through Exeter data. Exeter data is provided annually from the NHS and details the addresses of anyone over the age of 65. The model does not specifically take into account age but it is important that we continue to consider the age of our communities in relation to risk of a fire in the home; our fatalities are generally those over the age of 70 years and they remain a high-risk group to us.

How we profile risk of fires in non-residential buildings

Our Building Safety team is responsible for enforcing the Fire Safety Order 2005 across the County. There are in excess of 100,000 premises that fall within the scope of the Order and it is clearly unrealistic to visit them all, therefore resources must be prioritised to those where the risk is greatest. For that reason we have a methodology to identify those premises which we refer to as the risk based inspection programme.

We define high risk premises as *“those premises where people sleep or a licence (issued under the Licencing Act 2003) is in force and data suggests they are likely to have fires or any premises where intelligence indicates a perceived likelihood of an incident occurring”*.

There are three criteria to identify buildings for the risk based inspection programme which are:

- Buildings that fall into the top 5% of properties classified as high risk from the Experian Fire and Rescue Service Scored Risk Data; a commercially available database
- All specialist housing; the Experian data highlights that these types of properties are two times more likely to have a fire than the countywide average
- Tall residential buildings; those over 10 floors where the Experian analysis has highlighted a premises to be twice as likely to have a fire as the countywide average

In order to understand the risk that non-residential buildings present to us we utilise the Experian Fire and Rescue Service Scored Risk Data which is a commercially available database of buildings in the county. The dataset predicts the likelihood of a fire occurring at a premises and displays the information in a relative scale from 1 to 100. The methodology is statistically proven to predict that 80% of non-domestic fires that will happen will occur in the top 20% of highest risk buildings provided. The primary purpose for this dataset is to inform our risk-based inspection programme, but it also utilised as our master dataset of these buildings across the county. In addition it is also used by our Risk Information Team to target those buildings where we need to gather, record and manage risk information for effective firefighting and keeping our crews safe in the event of an incident.

To ensure we assess any changes to our front line response against the risk of fire in a non-domestic building, we have a model which simply takes the risk score provided the Experian data and aggregates the total score of all buildings within a defined area. This approach allows us to identify concentrations of buildings with a higher risk of a fire and consider this when we are reviewing where our fire engines are based and how quickly they can respond, exactly as we would for fires in the home.

In essence, one single dataset is providing risk information across all teams who need to utilise it allowing a consistent and coherent approach to this element of the community we serve.

How we profile risk of road traffic collisions

Profiling the risk of when and how often road traffic collisions will happen is considerably more difficult than profiling risk of fires in buildings. There are many factors that affect road traffic collision profiling, not least of which the ability to profile the drivers involved in these incidents. To understand the risk and likelihood of road traffic collision incidents we assess differences in road infrastructure, such as A and B classified roads, and use historic incident and casualty data to determine the levels of our interaction with these incidents. This allows us to identify the areas where incidents are more likely to occur and consider these when assessing our response approach.

How we consider response against these risks

Our response model aims to provide a comparison of the estimated response times for our current fleet of fire engines to each output area across our area. The model provides a base case to benchmark the estimated response of the first and second fire engines allowing us to assess the impact of changes we may want to make.

Additionally, we can take this response model and combine it with one of the risk models detailed above, allowing us to assess any areas at greater risk due to a longer response time predicted.

Demand

We use a wide range of data to help us understand and quantify where we need our resources.

We use data from all the incidents we have attended over the previous five years, look at key risk sites, and study local development plans from local authorities and the growth and infrastructure plan to look at where new demand may occur. A five year period of historic incident data is considered to be sufficient a time frame to allow for peaks and troughs in incident demand influenced by external factors.

Our historical data tells us where incidents have happened and sadly the people who have died or been injured in fires to note any trends or issues. Historic incident data is in fact 'realised risk' and is factored into our risk profiling models. We will look at individual incident types across areas as well to determine if any areas are over or under represented for incidents of a serious nature.

It is important not only to take into account incidents, but also to look at how busy our fire engines are, where they are being used and how they are being used. We review all occasions of simultaneous demand of our front line vehicles so we know how often multiple resources have been in use at one time and how long for. During the daytime we have fewer fire engines available, due to the availability of our on call staff, which can mean that relatively few incidents that are small in nature can deplete the fire engines we have available to cover the risk in the rest. Conversely, one large fire can have the same affect and last for many hours. In this scenario however we would put our resilience planning into effect, but it must be considered when looking at changes to emergency response cover models.

Our historic data allows us to assess the business as usual impacts on our resources, but it is also important that we consider those events which require wider scale planning for. All emergency services, local authorities and utility companies work together to keep our communities safe. We meet in what is known as the Kent Local Resilience Forum, one of our duties under a piece of legislation called the Civil Contingencies Act 2005. Part of the work of that group is to create and maintain a document called the Community Risk Register. This allows us to share data and information on our preparedness on the major risks in our area and then to determine how we would work together to prevent incidents, manage incidents when they occur and communicate with you.

Alongside all this data we also keep a live record of special risks such as historical buildings, waste recycling plants, big industrial sites, new housing estates being built and areas of natural beauty/wildlands. We also monitor emerging concepts such as dementia villages which are starting to be developed in our communities.

Isolation

The geography we have in Kent and Medway makes a fundamental difference to how we provide services - we look at how long it would take us to reach very rural areas, areas of high population density, areas of deprivation and then marry these to the historical data about types and numbers of emergencies. This doesn't totally predict the future but it can guide us about the type of equipment we need in different areas.

Another factor that needs to be taken into account is the amount of time it would take a second fire engine to arrive to a location, known to us as fire engine lag. Obviously the quickest response possible for the first fire engine is incredibly important and with the geography of Kent there will always be places that we cannot get to within our 10 minute target for life threatening incidents. Getting to incidents quickly matters. The sooner we arrive, the sooner we can help. The sooner we arrive, the less severe and potentially life-changing any burn injuries may be. The sooner we arrive, the less severe any property loss may be, be it in someone's home or their place of work. And the sooner we arrive the better the chances are of us performing a successful intervention if we need to. While one fire engine arriving can make a significant impact and will start to bring order and calm to the situation, there are many incidents which will need the staff and equipment from at least one other fire engine to bring the incident to a successful conclusion. Any proposed changes to front line service provision will assess any impacts on the time it takes for a second fire engine to arrive into an area.

How it all works together

All these elements come together to help us serve you better. In summary we approach assessing changes to emergency response provision by considering all the elements through a three phased approach of risk, demand and isolation.

There is no mathematical formula that weights these three things more important than one another, each is taken on its own merit and is therefore different across different geographical areas. This is our preferred approach because it allows us to truly assess our communities and not allow characteristics of one area overshadow the needs of another.

Professional judgement is key when considering making any changes to emergency response. We use a lot of data and information to create intelligence, but this approach will only take you so far, opinions of subject matter experts is incredibly important to sense check predictions against the real-world scenarios.

The three areas of response, protection and prevention are all working to the same definitions of risk and services are being tailored to ensure we meet the needs of our customers and protecting those who are deemed to be at greater risk through the use of data, intelligence and professional judgement and understanding.

Annex 3: Adopted Fire Standards

At the time of writing the Fire Standards Board have published the following standards, all of which have been adopted by Kent Fire and Rescue Service:

- Emergency Response Driver Training Fire Standard
- Operational Response: comprising Operational Preparedness, Operational Competence and Operational Learning Fire Standards
- Community Risk Management Planning Fire Standard
- Code of Ethics Fire Standard

A further two standards are undergoing a review and quality assurance process before the final versions are proposed to the Fire Standards Board for approval in 2021.

- Prevention Fire Standard (closed April 2021)
- Fire Protection Fire Standard (closed April 2021)

Following the publication of the first four standards, the Authority undertook a high level gap analysis of its position against each of the published fire standards. This identified that the Authority was compliant with the majority of the key areas of each of the four standards.

In addition, within Kent Fire and Rescue Service there already exists a well-established culture of professional standards, which is underpinned by and codified in a small number of key documents. The conduct of staff is taken very seriously and we have a Code of Conduct which clearly sets out the standards of ethical and professional behaviour we expect.

We place the utmost importance on holding ourselves to high standards of behaviour and integrity as embodied in the seven Nolan principles of public life: 1. Selflessness; 2. Integrity; 3. Objectivity; 4. Accountability; 5. Openness; 6. Honesty; 7. Leadership.

During the consultation period, the Authority was an active participant, engaging with and responding to each of the consultations on the proposed fire standards.

This same level of active engagements in the process will be taken with future consultations on additional standards.



Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy

2021 to 2025

Working together towards
a safer Kent and Medway



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service

together



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Introduction

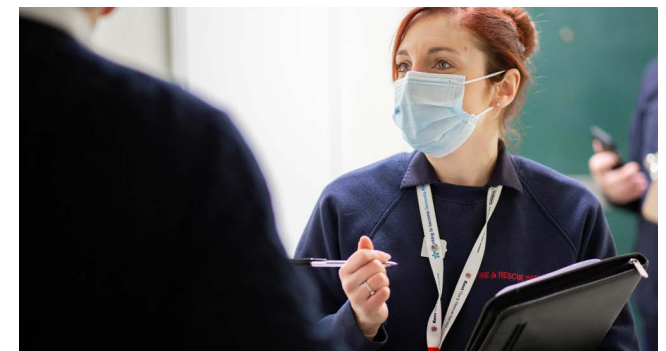
Our Customer Engagement and Safety strategy is one of six programmes which sets out our priorities over the next four years. It outlines how we will help people stay safe in their homes, on the roads, where they work and in places of education, whoever they are.

Over the past five years we have seen a 12% reduction in the number of fires across Kent and Medway. And we've seen fewer people killed on our roads. We aim to continue this trend as we work towards a future where no one is killed or seriously injured by a fire or other emergency.

For the first time, we have brought together our **protection, prevention, customer experience, collaboration, equality of access to services and engagement work** into one strategy. We recognise that each of these areas needs to work closely to be more effective and efficient. In 2020 we reorganised to create a directorate which aligns all of these teams to drive our change agenda.

We recognise we are on a journey. We will build on the changes we have made by transforming our services over the next four years.

Customer, **inclusion, technology, engagement and collaboration** are at the heart of our strategy. These themes run through every element of our action plan, helping us to deliver our strategic intentions by 2025.



Our priorities are:

Matching services to needs

Our customers are the reason we exist. We serve a hugely diverse community of people who live, work and travel through Kent and Medway. Over the next four years we aim to design our services so they are tailored to meet all our customers' needs and are accessible to everyone.

A safer built environment

We take our role as a fire safety regulator seriously, working tirelessly to minimise risk. We will support businesses, government and our partners to make buildings safer for our customers, ensuring they are designed and maintained to reduce the likelihood of a potential fire. The more fires we prevent, the safer our customers and our built environment will be.

Preventing and minimising harm

Early intervention helps save lives and reduces harm. It's core to our role as a fire and rescue service. Working with our customers, we will focus on promoting behaviours which help keep our communities safe. Early intervention is crucial in stopping fires and other emergencies from happening. We will seek to minimise harm through safeguarding people at risk, which is central to our goal of saving lives.



The strategy is designed to support the organisation's overall **Safety Plan**, in particular:



Promoting behaviours which help you to stay **safe** and well in your home.



Supporting businesses to help people to stay **safe** in their buildings and comply with legislation.



Encouraging you to adopt behaviours which keep you **safe** on the roads.



Helping you and the broader **community to stay safe** from harm caused by accidents, natural events or people intending harm.

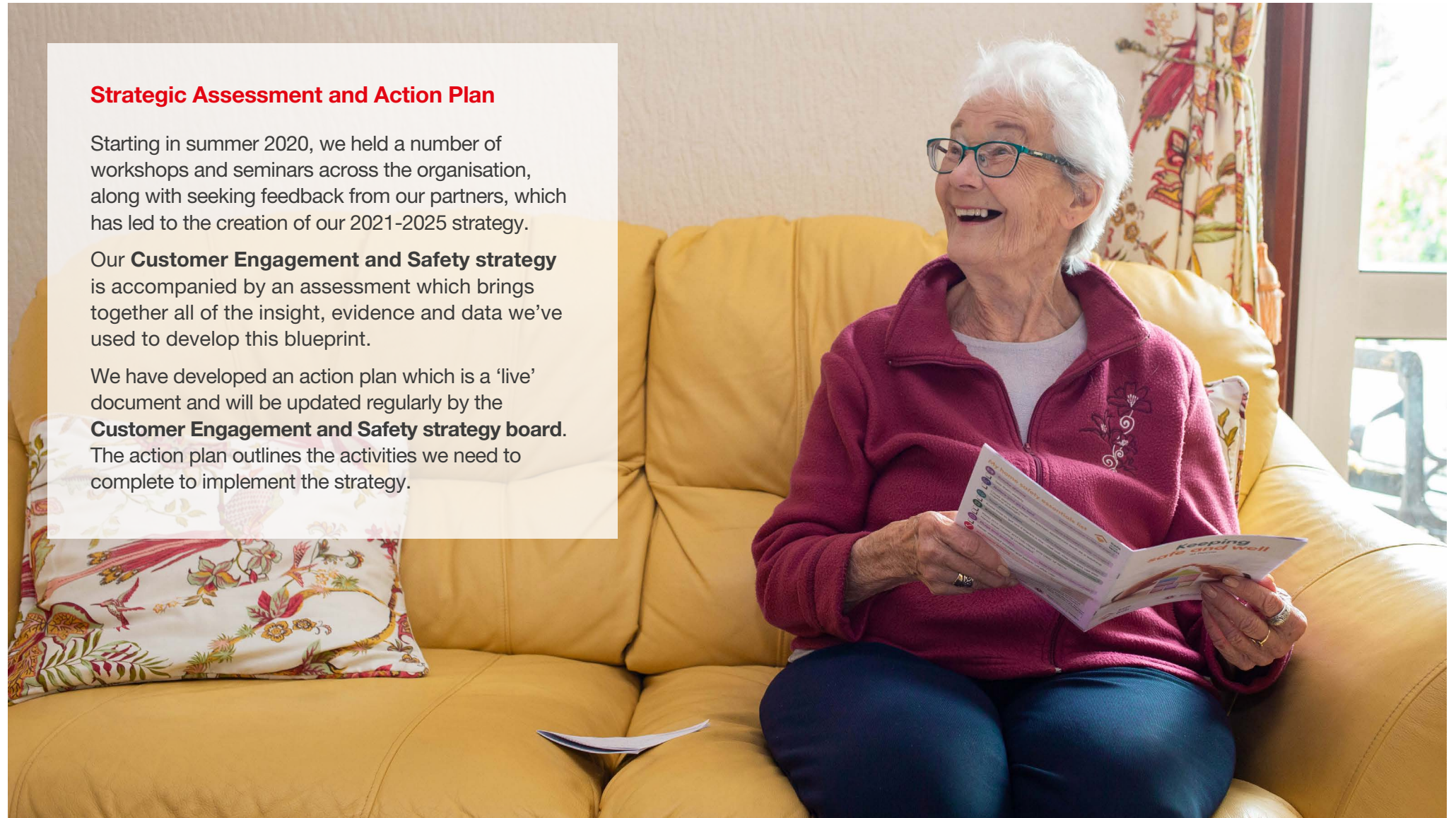
We also want to work with partners to address **health inequalities and improve the physical and mental wellbeing of people** living in Kent and Medway.

Strategic Assessment and Action Plan

Starting in summer 2020, we held a number of workshops and seminars across the organisation, along with seeking feedback from our partners, which has led to the creation of our 2021-2025 strategy.

Our **Customer Engagement and Safety strategy** is accompanied by an assessment which brings together all of the insight, evidence and data we've used to develop this blueprint.

We have developed an action plan which is a 'live' document and will be updated regularly by the **Customer Engagement and Safety strategy board**. The action plan outlines the activities we need to complete to implement the strategy.



Our priorities

Key objectives

Matching services to needs

- Increase access to all of our services
- Increased customer insight to improve our services
- Tailored services designed to meet the needs of all our customers, whoever they are
- Using the latest technology to engage with customers through targeted campaigns

A safer built environment

- Improve the safety of buildings through targeted and effective auditing and consultations
- Use smart, connected technology to make buildings safer
- Explore and implement new technology to enable effective mobile working

Preventing and minimising harm

- Create tailored prevention products and services through partnerships
- Improve our education services to make customers safer
- Embed effective behavioural change methods and messages in all our work
- Develop new road safety, water safety and arson prevention services with partners

Matching services to need

We're here for everyone. We pride ourselves in how we work with our customers. It's core to who we are. Four years ago we set out on a journey which put customers at the heart of everything we do. We are proud of the changes we have made. We have seen high levels of customer satisfaction, improved engagement and we've embedded an authentic approach to inclusion.

This priority seeks to make a step change in how we design services so they are bespoke to meet the needs of all our customers, internally and externally.

By 2025 we will have transformed our offer. We aim to remove barriers to accessing our services. We will ensure our products are tailored to work for everyone. And new technology will help us target customers through effective campaigns.



Achievements 2017 to 21



Established a **Customer Experience and Behaviour Change** team



Developed an **evaluation framework**



Developed a new **customer promise**



Achievements 2017 to 21



Where next?

Our action plan builds on the changes we've made over the last four years:



Embed the customer centric culture across the organisation



Develop and implement a customer experience plan



Create customer profiles to help design services which meet the needs of everyone



Carry out customer audience mapping exercises



Continue to develop processes and procedures to ensure excellent customer service



Review options on how we offer and tailor our services to our customers



Equality of access research and action plan for people with protected characteristics and customer groups



Equality of access research and action plans on the relationship between poverty and accidental dwelling fires



Review and establish standards for the quality of service provided by all teams



Deliver the customer and engagement work stream of the equality, diversity and inclusion programme



Build relationships with agencies and partners, sharing our equality, diversity and inclusion insights to support improvements in services



Review our services and look at ways to deliver more efficient products by collaborating with other agencies



Explore opportunities to share and integrate datasets with partners in the health sector



Enhance processes to monitor, review and evaluate the benefits and outcomes from collaboration activities



Develop a prioritised action plan using the equality of access research and knowledge acquired through community engagement



Embed the Service's brand refresh project to reach new audiences



Create a digital customer experience platform to enhance our services



Develop a new website focused on accessibility to improve the service we provide to customers



Deliver a web to print portal to improve efficiency



Review the use of social media, marketing and customer segmentation



Develop new targeted campaigns to help make our customers safer



Embed the full potential of the intranet to support teams to be more efficient and effective



Continually review the processes for internal communications and engagement



Continue to create targeted communications, segmenting internal audiences to improve two-way communications



Improve social listening to enhance how we support campaigns and operational incidents



Embed engagement campaigns which recognise digital poverty and reach customers on channels other than social media



Review the volunteers scheme following successfully securing Investing in Volunteers award



Review the delivery of events in a post-Covid-19 world



Create a process for planning and managing events



Define service level standards for our engagement activities



What does success look like?

We are always striving to be better at what we do, and by 2025 we will be succeeding in key areas:



Our offers will meet customer needs. And they will be easily accessed by everyone, whoever they are



We will have increased our understanding of behaviours that contribute to life risk and use that knowledge to design interventions that we know will help our customers lead safer lives



All our services will be designed to reflect changes in society. Our services will be regularly reviewed and kept up-to-date



There will be a consistent customer-centric culture in all parts of the organisation



We learn from customer visits, making changes to our services and our approach



As a learning organisation we will keep working to ensure we have effective, assertive and safe teams that are tested as competent and are licenced to act on the Service's behalf



Our services are evaluated to ensure they help to promote safer customer behaviours and to support continuous improvement



Better at what we do, with an improved understanding of our customers. Delivering a high standard of inclusive engagement, communications and volunteering



We will be inclusive of all our customers and continue to build a diverse workforce through our engaging content and communications



Using the latest technology available to us to engage with our customers at a higher level than we've done before. Intuitive technology that helps us predict behaviour to support the prevention and protection agenda



Highly productive and motivated teams with a well-established culture within the organisation, thanks to the influence through communication, enabling our people to work and volunteer for a modern thinking FRS



Events that deliver quality engagement with specific target audiences, using technology to enhance customer experience, behaviour change and education.



Strong reputation as forward thinking, modern emergency service seen as a pioneering service by our partners and customers

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our objectives.

Description	Indicator
Engagement and service level standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➡ % increase in the number of people/groups engaged/accessing services➡ Organisational survey results➡ Benchmarking from charities and voluntary groups, for example, Pride in Care➡ Feedback from community groups➡ Establishment of service levels➡ Annual targets agreed using the baseline figures
Organisational motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➡ Levels of unplanned absence➡ Levels of retention➡ Organisation surveys➡ Team engagement and culture➡ Embedded culture of inclusion
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➡ Volunteer and team surveys to understand the reputation of the volunteer scheme➡ Clear results of the strategic work delivered by the volunteers➡ Develop new opportunities for the volunteer scheme to support and deliver strategic objectives➡ Achievement of the Investing in Volunteers award by 2022➡ Levels of volunteer retention and inactivity
Levels of co-creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➡ Improved evidence of co-creation

Description	Indicator
Institute of Customer Service benchmarking	➞ ServiceMark accreditation – the national standard recognising an organisation's achievement in customer service
Evaluation of interventions	➞ Number of interventions that have been evaluated 🎯 Target: All new interventions consistently evaluated by 2025. Plan-Do-Study-Act process consistently applied and evaluation activities planned in.
Customer behaviour	➞ Outcomes of the evaluation process looking at behaviour changes before and after the intervention ➞ Reduction in risk and/or incidents
Training	➞ Customer focus and behaviour change training delivered to all our teams
Evidence-based decisions	➞ Recognised process established and clear examples of key decisions being evidence based
Customer personas	➞ Customer personas developed for key services and used across the organisation
Audience mapping	➞ Clear understanding of our target audiences, where they are, who they are and their needs

A safer built environment

The tragic fire at Grenfell Tower highlighted the need for major improvements to the built environment. Since then we have developed a new approach to Building Safety, which has led to significant improvements.

This priority is a crucial area of focus. Making buildings safer for all our customers is core to our role and our vision.

As the fire safety regulator for Kent and Medway we will audit all high risk buildings by 2025. We will work with businesses to raise standards, ensure premises are well designed and work with partners to use technology which will make our customers safer.



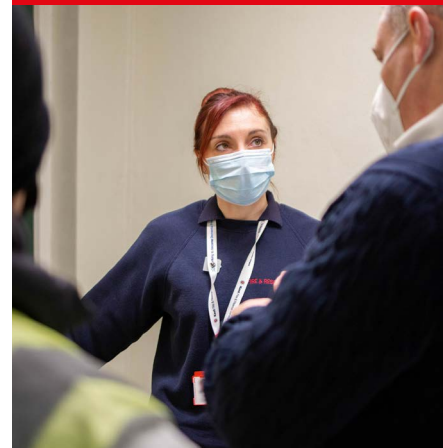
Achievements 2017 to 21



Doubled the number
of **fire safety audits**
completed



Training all Building Safety
Inspectors so **everyone**
has a **Level 4 diploma in**
fire safety



Achievements 2017 to 21



Where next?

Our action plan builds on the changes we've made over the last four years:



Put the residents' voice at the heart of our Building Safety work



Meet the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council competency framework for protection



Continue to develop a multifunctional and resilient Building Safety team which allows officers to carry out audits and building consultations



Work with the public and private sector to adopt a 'smart cities' approach to new developments to allow connected technology to support the care of customers with additional needs e.g. wearable monitors giving bio feedback for people living with dementia which indicate falls



Share our insights with the public, private and third sectors to support improvements in the built environment, including the conversion of town centre buildings to residential use



Work with the fire protection sector to develop expertise following the introduction of new fire safety legislation



Work with businesses to develop smarter connected fire detection technology, which focuses on 'close calls' to make customers safer



Continue to grow our relationships with Building Safety partner agencies to make the built environment safer



Review the processes used for sharing risk information and technical knowledge with operational crews



Complete the Building Risk Review of tall buildings and share insights with partners



Implement a project to share data between teams to help keep our customers safe



Assess the impact of new fire safety legislation, developing or aligning processes/resources as necessary



Implement a project to reduce the number of unwanted automatic fire alarm calls



Work with minority ethnic business groups to understand the barriers to engagement and compliance



Review the Building Safety career development pathway to boost retention



Review the Building Safety portal to provide clear advice and information to help customers live and work in safer buildings



Research and develop new ways of engaging with businesses to encourage compliance



Invest in fire engineering apprenticeships to build competence up to and continuing to degree level to improve succession planning.



Support the National Fire Chiefs Council with the protection policy, process and guidance reviews to improve best practice



Explore how we can use the primary authority scheme to support the safety of customers and meet our wider objectives



Promote fire engineering roles to women and minority ethnic groups to bring different perspectives and help us better understand our customers' needs



Review the key performance indicators used to measure the performance of Building Safety



Review the Safer Living and Safer Care initiatives to help customers living in residential care and supported housing lead safer lives



What does success look like?

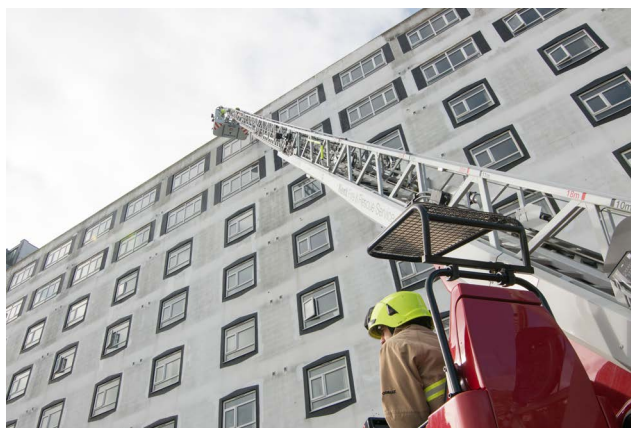
We're always striving to be better at what we do, and by 2025 we will be succeeding in key areas:



Multi-skilled, professional and flexible team that can provide a great service to the public to ensure people are kept safe within the built environment. Identifying and developing the leaders and Fire Engineers of the future within Building Safety



Our Building Safety services will be fully tailored, accessible and adaptable to meet the needs of all our customer



Strong and effective working relationship with Housing Associations and the Care community



Strong and effective working relationship with government, the building safety regulators, partner agencies and internal teams. Sharing insights and ensuring we all work together to provide the best service to ensure our customers' safety



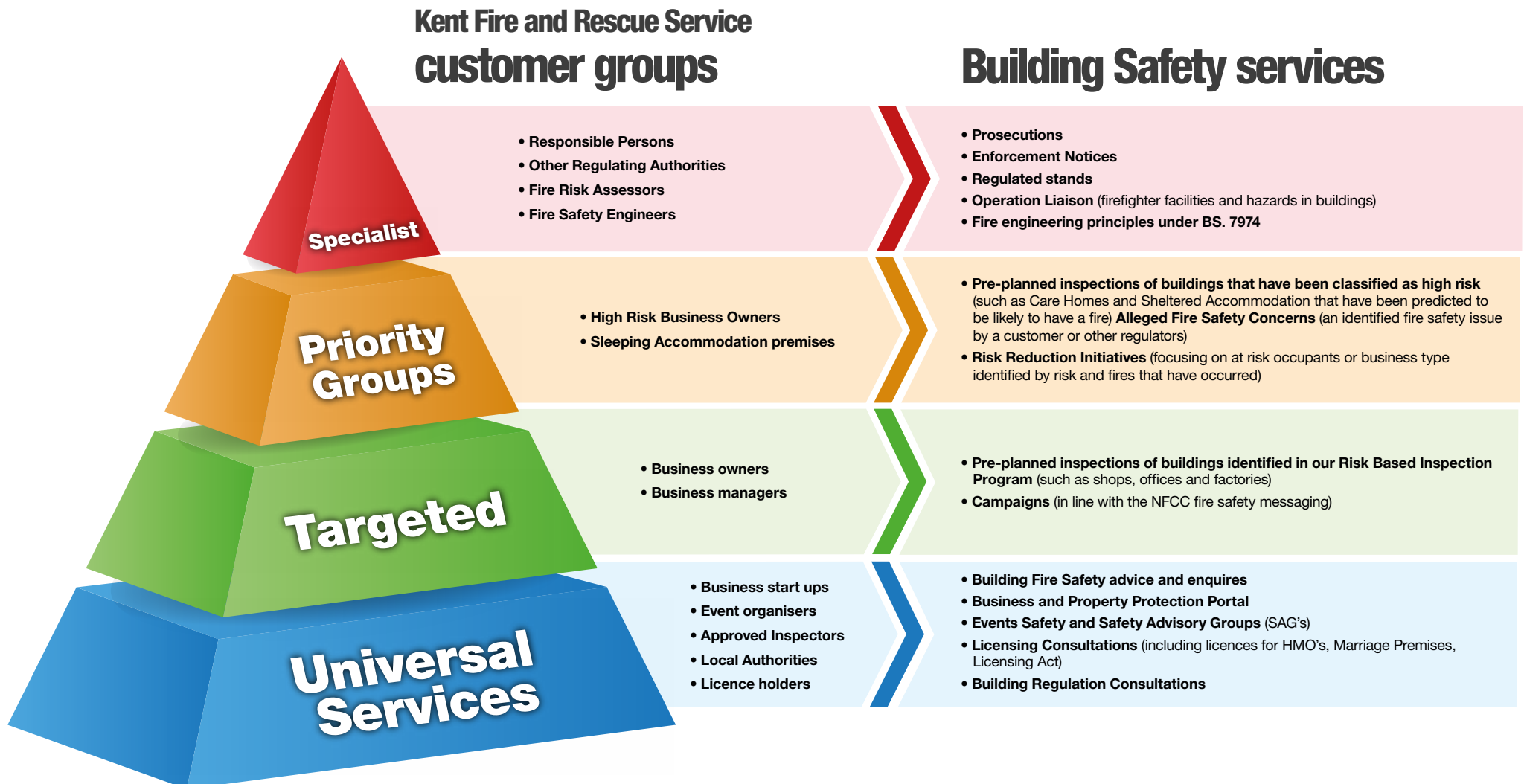
Efficient teams, able to work remotely and able to focus on the safety of customers by spending less time on administration



Our customers will be using improved technology to keep vulnerable residents safe



Wide corporate understanding of the differing needs of our community through community engagement and research. Easy to access services designed flexibly to cater for those needs. Different packages in place for specific groups



How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our objectives.

Description	Indicator
Quality Assurance: Assessing the appropriateness of actions taken	➡ % reduction in the number of rejected enforcement notices
Audits completed	➡ % increase in the number of audits completed
Building regulations consultations	➡ Number of building regulations consultations completed within 21 days from receipt. 🔄 Target: 95%
Inspections in high risk premises	➡ 80% of all our effort and activity directed into high risk premises
Levels of enforcement actions and successful prosecutions (where appropriate)	➡ % increase in enforcement action and successful prosecutions (where appropriate) ➡ Benchmark % of minority ethnic business owners where enforcement action has been taken
Team performance	➡ % increase in the number of people from the fire inspection team regularly completing building regulations consultations
Inspectors third party accreditation	➡ % of colleagues with third party accreditation in line with NFCC competency framework for protection. 🔄 Target: all inspectors* with third party accreditation by 2025 (Level 4 diploma) <i>*all inspectors who have worked in the department for two years or more</i>

Description	Indicator
Compliance levels	➞ Increase in compliance in buildings that Housing Associations and the Care community are responsible for
Number of unwanted automatic fire alarm calls	➞ % decrease in the number of unwanted automatic fire alarm calls 🔊 Target: 25% reduction in false alarms that we attend in buildings where passive and active technology is installed
Number of fires	➞ % decrease in the number of fires in regulated premises 🔊 Target: 25% reduction in fires that we attend in buildings where passive and active technology is installed
Productivity levels	➞ Increase in activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fire Safety concerns (response to within LPI)• Point incident audits• Number of audits completed per inspector• Building consultations (meeting LPI)
Compliance levels	➞ Increase in compliance in buildings that Housing Associations and the Care community are responsible for

Preventing and minimising harm

Our prevention work helps reduce harm and saves lives. We are working towards a future where no one is killed or seriously injured by a fire, a road crash a water rescue, or life risk.

Over the past four years we have made large-scale changes to safeguarding and prevention, which have helped drive better services for our customers.

This priority focuses on transforming our educational programmes, making a step change in our approach to safeguarding by providing additional support to customers through schemes such as 'safe havens'. And by working with industry to develop smart technology which will make our customers safer.



Achievements 2017 to 21



Achievements

2017 to 21



High level of
safeguarding
awareness amongst
our teams



Developed our
quality assurance
processes



Supported customers
through the **delivery of**
hot meals, prescriptions
and **food** during COVID-19



Developed '**The Byrnes**
family' product to engage
and educate young
children and their families
about safety

Where next?

Our action plan builds on the changes we've made over the last four years:



Work with industry to develop new home, road and water safety technology to keep customers safe



Finalise and implement the risk stratification for Customer Safety to ensure our prevention work targets people most at risk



Develop a competency framework for Customer Safety and share with the National Fire Chiefs Council



Evolve and tailor the Safeguarding training we give to everyone who works or volunteers here to reflect changes in society



Create 'safe havens' within KFRS buildings to give customers a space to get mental health support



Review how we can work with agencies and partners to help prevent suicide



Roll out training to the whole organisation on behaviour change so that this becomes part of the culture of our teams and how we operate



Develop performance reporting capability for safeguarding, Safe & Well, Home Fire Safety visits and firesetter interventions



Develop arson prevention campaigns and sign up to the Fire Stopper initiative to reduce the number of deliberate/arson incidents



Review Safe and Well visits and Home Fire Safety visits to continue to improve the services we provide to customers



Develop themed campaigns and action weeks to increase the number of Safe and Well visits and Home Fire Safety visits carried out



Review our approach to engagement with Safe and Well referrers



Research smoke alarm testing frequency and review the advice we provide



Develop a process for Safe and Well case management to provide a better experience for customers



Evolve our burns and scalds campaigns to reach new audiences



Review our education offer to reflect changes in society



Develop our online education offer for schools to meet customer needs



Review the primary and secondary school programmes



Explore options to deliver interventions for pre-school children right through to young adults and youth groups



Research and evaluate the firesetters programme to ensure it reflects current issues and customer needs



Establish a process for capturing customer feedback for education and firesetters



Develop personal resilience programme and support networks for lone workers



Implement and embed quality assurance processes to meet service level standards



Review the work of Safe & Well call representatives to improve quality and performance



Build strong relationships with community safety partnerships and task forces to ensure the service's objectives are prioritised as part of our common activities



Implement a partnership approach to water safety to reduce the number of water related deaths and injuries across Kent and Medway



Support the Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership's vision zero strategy by developing initiatives and engagement to reduce road crashes





What does success look like?

We're always striving to be better at what we do, and by 2025 we will be succeeding in key areas:



Increased and sustained performance. Able to evidence that we provide high quality services to our customers



Increased customer focus: our offers meeting customer needs. They will be inclusive and easily accessed by all our customers, and support target audiences. We will increase our understanding of how to design person centred services and the behaviour factors that contribute to fire risk



Together with everyone who works here, develop a positive learning environment to help stretch development and maintain wellbeing, to deliver better services for our customers



Effective collaboration with all our partners including the task force, community safety partnerships and the third sector that meet the Service's objectives. And all partners understand the range of services that we provide

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our objectives.

Description	Indicator
Measures on behaviour change as part of case management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Definition of performance data and behaviour change that needs to be captured and identification of the baseline so that future targets for improvement can be agreed
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Evaluation is always planned and completed as part of the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle as we review or introduce new prevention programmes or activities. Measured through audit and case studies.
Customer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Safe and well: Increase customer feedback and maintain results. ➔ Education and firesetters: establish mechanisms to identify baselines and report performance
Cancellation rate for Safe and Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ % decrease in the number of cancelled Safe and Well visits
Planned reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Completion of all the planned reviews of our education products
Access to our education resources and sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ % increase in the number of customers accessing our education resources and sessions
Establishment of baseline data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer feedback • Quality assurance (education, Safe and Well, firesetters, safeguarding) Team and individuals' performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Work completed to allow us to identify the baseline and set future targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and Well and Home Fire Safety visits: Increase customer feedback and maintain results. • Education and firesetters: establish mechanisms to identify baselines and report performance • Improvement in quality on the baseline ➔ % increase in the number of Safe and Well visits carried out ➔ %increase in the number of Home Fire Safety visits carried out

Description	Indicator
Access to our education resources and sessions	➞ % increase in the number of customers accessing our education resources and sessions
Number of referrals	➞ % increase in the number of referrals
Number of agencies and partners that we work with	➞ % increase in the number of agencies/partners that we work with
Productivity levels	➞ Achievement of service level standards
Competency framework	➞ KFRS prevention competency framework developed by 2022
Lone worker resilience and wellbeing	➞ % reduction in levels of unplanned absence ➞ Organisational survey
Safeguarding	➞ New training completed and rolled out to everyone who works and volunteers here

Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy

2021 to 2025

Working together towards
a safer Kent and Medway



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service

together

Response & Resilience Strategy

2021 – 2025

Working together towards a safer Kent and Medway



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service

together

Introduction

Our Response and Resilience Strategy is one of six which set out our aims over the next four years. It outlines how we will prepare for emergencies and how we will respond to them.

We will adopt a customer centred approach. We will aim to deliver a high quality service. And we will ensure all customers have access to help when they need it, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or how they live their lives. We want our customers to feel like we will do all that we possibly can to help them. We also strive to ensure that we adapt our response to meet the individual needs of every customer we help.

Tragedies such as the Grenfell Tower fire and the Manchester Arena bombing have raised the need for change in the fire and rescue service. We have made many changes to the way we prepare for, and respond to, major incidents like these. We have an operational assurance process that ensures we identify learning and use it to improve how we respond. We aim to be a learning organisation.

Over the past five years we have seen a 12% reduction in the number of fires across Kent and Medway. And we've seen fewer people killed on our roads. At the same time, technology is constantly changing. Buildings are becoming more complicated in their design. More electric vehicles are on the roads and there is a move toward self-driving cars. These present new challenges.

The changing world around us is also presenting us with new challenges. Climate change is leading to more extreme weather events. We have seen an increase in flooding and outdoor fires in recent years and anticipate that this trend will continue.

All of this underlines the need for us to be prepared to respond to an increasingly diverse and complex range of emergencies, using the professionalism and problem solving skills of our highly trained people.

The strategy is designed to support the organisation's overall corporate plan, known as the Customer Safety Plan. Our corporate aims are:

- Responding effectively in times of customer need;
- Promoting behaviours which help you stay safe and well in your home;
- Encouraging you to adopt behaviours which keep you safe on the roads;
- Supporting businesses to help people to stay safe in their buildings and comply with legislation;
- Helping you and the broader community to stay safe from harm caused by accidents, natural events or people intending harm

Strategic Assessment and Action Plan

Starting in summer 2020, we held a number of internal workshops and seminars, along with seeking feedback from our partners, including other fire and rescue services and police forces nationally, which has led to the creation of our 2021-2025 strategy.

Our Response and Resilience Strategy is supported by an assessment which brings together all of the insight, evidence and data we've used to develop this blueprint.

This includes:

- The ten year forward assessment of risks and challenges presented in the Customer Safety Plan
- An analysis conducted by the Response and Resilience team of the current environment they are operating in
- A strengths and weaknesses analysis conducted by the Response and Resilience team
- Engagement across the organisation, capturing what everyone that works for us thinks the future holds
- National and international research on the impact of climate change and impacts on the natural environment
- Operational debriefs of incidents we have attended

- Feedback received from completed projects
- Completed people impact assessments and equality of access case studies
- The outcome of research on exposure to, and mitigating the impacts of, contaminants in the workplace
- The requirements contained within the Fire and Rescue National framework
- National Operational Guidance
- Best practice defined within the national fire standards
- Assessments contained within the National Risk Register and Community Risk Register
- Future planning proposals contained within the local Growth and Infrastructure Framework

We have developed an action plan which is a 'live' document and will be updated regularly by the Response and Resilience Board. The action plan outlines the activities we need to complete to implement the strategy.

Our priorities between 2021 and 2025 are:

Ensure what we do is driven by an understanding of risk

Our customers could face a diverse range of risks from natural events, incidents in the home or acts of terrorism. Effective response is derived from a thorough understanding of risk. Our understanding of these risks should drive the way we prepare for them occurring and allow us to make sure we direct our resources to the highest risks the public face. It will also help us to empower communities to help themselves, for example by encouraging volunteering as flood wardens.

Further evolve our ability to respond to different customer needs

Being truly effective requires more than simply putting a fire out or rescuing someone in danger. All our customers are different and have different needs. So, we cannot adopt a 'one size fits all' approach. We want to perfect and tailor our response so that it is as effective as it can be for that individual or particular situation.

Always be ready to respond with the right skills and equipment, aligned to National Guidance, supported by a range of tactical options.

Our colleagues are the most important resource we have. We work with our human resources team to ensure we recruit people with the behaviours and values we need. We will regularly review the crewing levels across our stations to make sure we have the capacity to respond when we are needed. We will continue to provide our colleagues with the latest information, policies and equipment to respond effectively. We will support this by ensuring our colleagues have the skills to safely resolve incidents with best interests of our customers in mind. When incidents do occur, we will send the most appropriate response to give the greatest chance of delivering the outcomes our customers need, and make sure we move resources as required to be able to continue to respond in that area. We will focus on learning about tactical options and decision making.

Actively seek opportunities to improve what we do, against clear standards

We are committed to learning from the experiences of our customers, partners, and colleagues. We will continue to embed a culture of learning that allows us to deal with new situations and problems. This drives innovation and allows us to become more

skilled and experienced. We proactively seek out feedback and use our assurance processes to measure the effectiveness of changes we make.

Our priorities

Key objectives

<p>Ensure what we do is driven by an understanding of risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we understand all the reasonably foreseeable risks our customers face in their local area and prioritise our activities accordingly • Identify emerging or changing risks, such as those posed by new technologies or climate change, and take action to be able to mitigate harm • Use an assessment of risk to identify where we may be able to help partner agencies with responding to those in need • Ensure the activities we undertake actively contribute to driving down the impact of emergencies
<p>Further evolve our ability to respond to different customer needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed people impact assessments into the way we plan for, develop, and implement improvements to the service we provide to customers. • Use our understanding of risk to drive improvements to the quality of our service, and strive to ensure we exceed customer expectations • Work with partners to seek opportunities to deliver more activities that provide better customer outcomes • Provide guidance, training and resources to our colleagues to understand how to adapt what they do to the needs of individual customers
<p>Always be ready to respond with the right skills, information and equipment, aligned to National Guidance, supported by a range of tactical options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond with the right people who have the necessary skills and equipment to implement the most effective tactical options • Constantly review the location of our resources according to risk, demand and isolation, using systems that allow us to get to customers as quickly as we can • Be more able to flex our resources to respond to changes in demand and major incidents • Ensure the training we deliver is aligned to National Guidance in order to deliver operational excellence and improve the safety of customers and colleagues • Use improvements in technology to enable our colleagues to deliver the best outcome • Improve our capability for reducing the impact of incidents on the environment

<p>Actively seek opportunities to improve what we do, against clear standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure what we do against published national fire standards and the standards expected by our customers. A culture of exceeding these standards will be implemented to support a high quality of response. • Use data from across the Service, including customer feedback, to identify trends and proactively assess the quality of the service we provide, making changes to improve our response • Further develop an environment where colleagues feel able to identify problems and best practice which we all learn from • Further develop our operational assurance reporting to constantly assess “how good are we?” • Use findings from significant incidents, prevention of future death reports, and inquiries, both nationally and internationally, to improve our service
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Priority one – Ensure what we do is driven by an understanding of risk

- **Why do we need to do this?**

Our customers face a diverse range of risks from natural events to acts of terrorism. Effective response is derived from a thorough understanding of risk. We want to close the gap between our understanding of the risks we can reasonably foresee our customers may face, and how that drives the way we prepare for them occurring. This means we prioritise our preparation for emergencies around those that are either more likely to happen or if they happen are likely to have a much bigger impact on our customers, their property and the environment. Whilst we use information to assess the impact of those events, we think we can be better at using this to inform improvements we want to make. This understanding will allow us to make sure we direct our resources to the highest risks the public face and will allow us to prepare a more effective response to such events. It will also help us to empower communities to help themselves.

Our customers expect that we will not only understand the risks they face but have the knowledge, understanding and means to mitigate risks to keep customers safe and well. Responding effectively to a small grass fire or a large scale industrial fire, flooding event or hazardous material spillage requires a flexible approach that can only be determined by understanding risk.

- **Achievements 2017-21**

- Established a Risk Information Team with a new system to support this work and communicate risks to colleagues when they need it
- Permanently established the Kent Resilience Team, at our headquarters
- Invested in new mobile devices to communicate risk to operational teams at emergency incidents
- Supported the Kent Resilience Forum in reviewing national risks such as flooding and translating this into plans to manage local risks
- Completed a tall buildings review across Kent and Medway with Building Safety and Community Safety colleagues following the Grenfell Tower disaster and revisited this work again in 2021
- Played a key role with partners in the response to COVID and the impacts of EU Exit in Kent and Medway

- **Where next?**

- Further deepen our understanding of emerging risks associated with new technologies
- Further understand the impact of climate change and how we need to adapt our preparedness
- Continue to work with local authorities to understand proposed changes to infrastructure and housing, and how this may affect our risk and demand patterns
- Understand changes in risk created by post-pandemic changes to the way people live and work
- Align our understanding of risk with the 'place' where customers live and work and travel – including national risks, regional risks, county risks, community risks and individual customer risks
- Continue to work with other fire and rescue services to build a collective understanding of national risks with a specific focus on working with neighbouring fire and rescue services
- Continue to use the knowledge and expertise of colleagues in our Building Safety team to improve our operational understanding of building design and its influence on firefighting tactics
- Continue to collect information and data that supports our continued understanding of risk, improving the quality of our response
- Continue to work with Kent Resilience Forum partners to build and improve the resilience of communities to risks like wide scale flooding.
- Use data more effectively to measure performance and target improvements

- **What does success look like?**

- Full understanding of risk in place with the ability to describe all the risks that a customer or community face and how to mitigate them when the risk is realised.
- Clear, accurate and timely risk information is available when we need it in a format that is easy to interpret and understand.
- Data and evidence are used to determine the risks our customers face

- Changing or emerging risks are consistently identified early enough for changes to response to be implemented
- Knowledge and application of risk information is improved across the Service.
- The range of risks from across the Service can be described in the context of a 'place' in Kent and Medway and made available to customers
- All operational policies and procedures are based on the requirements to remove or reduce risk
- A coordinated and consolidated risk based inspection programme is in place for buildings in Kent and Medway ensuring our resources are targeted at the most important risks

- **How will we measure performance against our objectives?**

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
National and Kent community risk register risks	100% of all fire and rescue service risk assessments remain in date and reviewed regularly
Site Specific Risk information	100% of sites with site specific risk information held in our dynamics system are reviewed and in date
Risk Based inspection programme	A programme coordinated with building safety teams is in place and all risk premises are reviewed at least every 7 years
Response assessment visits	100% of sites and premises are visited in line with policy and procedure
Exercises	A coordinated programme for exercises is completed
Risk in neighbouring fire services	The programme of response assessment visits and exercises that we do with our neighbouring fire services is complete
Performance	Our performance targets reflect the indicators above and our new 'standards' developed in priority 4 of this strategy

Priority two – Further evolve our ability to respond to different customer needs

- **Why do we need to do this?**

Being truly effective requires more than putting a fire out or rescuing someone in danger. All our customers are different and have different needs. In the past we have often adopted a 'one size fits all' approach. We now recognise we need to flex our response according to need. By understanding that need we can make sure we train and equip our responders to be able to provide the best level of service for that customer.

To do this we will make sure that People Impact Assessments lie at the heart of everything we do, using information a range of sources such as incident data, feedback from customers and commercially available profiling data. This will mean our response can be tailored to need. For example, we know that customers living with certain types of disabilities may be unable to self-rescue and may require the use of specialist equipment to help them to safely evacuate with dignity. This approach will also allow us to be more customer focused when buying equipment, developing operational tactics and training our colleagues. We want to ensure the standard of quality of our response gives the best service possible. We recognise that customers may rarely or never use our services so may not know what a high quality service is. Being clear about what 'good' looks like and refining how we measure quality will be at the heart of this priority.

Our society is changing all the time and we need to adapt to make sure we provide our customers with the help they need. We will work alongside colleagues in our customer safety team and partner agencies to undertake targeted interventions, identified by the customer safety team with our most vulnerable customers. For example, as people are living longer, and care is being delivered increasingly in their homes, we are finding that we are getting more calls to assist with older people that have fallen. In addition, the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic also underlined the need for us to be able to support our colleagues in the health sector during periods of high demand. We want to prioritise the training of our colleagues to work with partners to be able to deliver better health outcomes for our customers. This will provide improvements in the quality of the services we currently deliver, whilst also opening opportunities to support our customers in different ways in the future.

- **Achievements 2017-21**

- Started the introduction of people impact assessments into our operational guidance
- Adopted the principles contained within the 'Saving Lives is Not Enough Report', focused on improving our ability to deliver care to customers suffering burns
- Developed and implemented new and innovative response practices for incidents in tall buildings, including evacuation arrangements, smoke hoods and smoke curtains
- Introduced 'rescue loaders', which are stretchers used on our turntable ladders that help to safely remove customers with mobility issues from the upper floors of buildings
- Collaborated with South East Coast Ambulance Service to roll out a wider emergency medical response capability directly resulting in saving the lives of at least 57 customers over the last three years
- Ensured we maintained our ability to respond to emergencies, during the pandemic, whilst also diversifying what we do providing significant support to partner agencies – particularly the health sector

- **Where next?**

- Clearly define, and publish, a quality standard for operational response in order to allow us to measure what we class as "good customer service"
- Continue the programme of work to review our operational capabilities prioritised according to our assessment of risk and customer need
- Further develop our use of people impact assessments for operational policy and procedures
- Continue to engage with colleagues to ensure we all understand the importance of adapting what we do to meet customer need
- Incorporate dynamic assessment of customer needs into our incident command training
- Work with our partners in the Ambulance service to improve our casualty handling arrangements
- Continue to improve the way we support partner organisations deliver their response, such as searching for missing persons
- Review our post incident arrangements to ensure we put in place the best care package

we can to prevent further suffering, including continuing to ensure we identify and respond to all forms of safeguarding concerns

- Make changes to the way we handover incidents to the customer or partner organisations to

makes sure we remove the risk of the incident causing further harm

- Work with the market to help develop other ways to contact us in an emergency. Utilise technology to be able to obtain information from the public, such as live stream videos

- **What does success look like?**

- Customer's feeling that we have put their needs first
- Colleagues feeling empowered to make decisions based on what is best for the customer, taking a customer-centric approach
- Colleagues having confidence in their ability to recognise and adapt to individual customer needs
- All of our operational guidance and training having meaningful content derived from a People Impact Assessment
- A well-practiced and seamless response to falls and lifting of customers, utilising the same procedures and training as the ambulance service
- Evidence of more regularly supporting other organisations such as Age Concern, Kent Search and Rescue, and the Coastguard with our resources to deliver better outcomes for them and their customers
- Colleagues feeling well equipped and confident in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns, including how to refer and signpost
- An effective handover process that is used at every relevant incident

- **How will we measure performance against our objectives?**

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
People Impact Assessments	100% of operational guidance supported by a People Impact Assessment A People Impact Assessment operational policy toolkit published and available
Operational Capability	A programme of operational capability review that delivers defined benefits, supported by evidence of improvement
Customer outcome focus	Customer feedback - Proactive engagement with customers to understand this Evidence of customer-centric decision making through command assessment and incident debriefs Institute of Customer Service accreditation
Casualty Handling	Increase in frequency of incidents attended (initially – although recognising ultimate goal to reduce occurrence of incidents occurring) Reduction in injuries to colleagues caused by casualty handling Evidenced completion of casualty handling training SECamb evaluation of our casualty handling effectiveness
Support to partner organisations	Jointly developed response protocols for relevant incident types Evidence of attendance at a wider range of incident types
Post incident care	Safeguarding referrals Staff 'temperature check' and self-assessment Evidence of completion of incident handover procedure, including information recording

Priority three – Always be ready to respond with the right skills and equipment, aligned to National Guidance, supported by a range of tactical options

Why do we need to do this?

We need to be ready to respond for customers in their greatest time of need - from small scale to major incidents, both locally and nationally. Our services cannot stop, and we need to be prepared to keep the service running no matter what. We will ensure we have the resources available to be able to respond when our customers need us. This includes national and international deployments of our teams.

We will use data, including our predicted speed of response and the isolation, risks and vulnerabilities that communities face, to review the levels of resources we need. This will allow us to identify and implement changes to improve our response, whilst continuing to provide value for money.

Over the last couple of years, we have worked to align our ways of working to best practice and National Guidance. We have also invested significantly in equipment that gives our responders the tools they need to do their job effectively. We now want to consolidate this, and be as operationally effective as we can be, by ensuring our training gives our colleagues the skills they need to be able to apply the best tactics to any situation. We will also provide opportunities for our colleagues to increase their professional interest in their career with us through an improved programme of training events and exercises. We will be rehearsing for excellence and consistency in response, ensuring the highest quality service to our customers.

• Achievements 2017-21

- We have introduced and are fully aligned to National (Operational) Guidance
- Internal Audit rated our Incident Command arrangements 'substantial'
- Introduced new and innovative equipment, increasing the range of tactical options available

- Introduced the operational element of the new Dynamics system
- Partnered with the Institution of Fire Engineers to provide a programme of professional accreditation for all our operational colleagues
- Introduced the Integrated Learning and Assurance Model which harnesses different ways of learning, exercise of incidents along with interaction with our customers at different levels to deliver better data and competence

- **Where next?**

- Complete a further data driven review of the levels or resources we need, exploring changes we need to make to improve our response, whilst continuing to provide value for money
- Continue to review the capability of our operational vehicles, and the equipment carried on them, to ensure our colleagues have the necessary tools to provide excellence in customer service
- Undertake a review of our 999 call function, looking at where it is located and the systems available to us
- Further empower our fire control colleagues to be able to provide situational awareness to crews on route to an incident, whilst also providing support and comfort to customers in distress
- Improve the way the we manage information relating to an incident with the goal of being able to rapidly create, transmit and store that information at the incident
- Further enhance the improvements we made to our ability to deal with survival guidance calls following the Grenfell Tower tragedy
- Continue to develop and improve our training material, aligning all content to National Guidance
- Continue to roll out our Integrated Learning and Assurance work
- Improve our capability to reduce the impact of incidents on the environment
- Continue to develop tactics and introduce technology that helps to reduce the number of times we need our firefighters to enter burning buildings to put a fire out
- Continue to review and improve our approach to reducing exposure of firefighters, customers and our partners to contaminants

- Develop ways of being able to call in additional firefighters to rapidly back fill in times of significant demand, effectively providing a reserve capability, allowing us to flex resource according to need
- Learn the lessons from COVID to improve operational productivity
- Be more proactive in seeking out opportunities to work with neighbouring fire and rescue services, aligning arrangements where possible, to provide a more consistent, effective and efficient service
- Support the development and adoption of the Emergency Services Network

- **What does success look like?**

- Being able to quickly scale up or down the resources available to us dependant on demand
- Colleagues that take a pride in their role and actively work on developing their own professionalism
- Implement changes to our emergency response provision and consistently be able to resource the demand for that provision
- Colleagues having access to equipment that enables them to implement the approach to resolving the incident that they believe will be most effective
- Our fire control operators being located in a location that fully meets their needs and having a new system that allows them to deliver outstanding customer service
- Faster and more usable information flow at an incident
- A seamless and accurate flow of information and communication between our control operators and fire fighters undertaking rescues
- Engaging training materials that accurately reflect national guidance
- A reduction in the risk colleagues need to take in order to deliver the same, or better, outcomes
- When not attending incidents, our firefighters being actively engaged with training or customer interactions
- Being able to call on, or assist, neighbouring fire services without the need to put additional arrangements or 'work arounds' in place

- **How will we measure performance against our objectives?**

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Review of Emergency Response Provision	Delivering a more cost effective service whilst maintaining, or improving, the speed at which we respond to incidents
Improving the capability of our vehicles and equipment	Feedback from colleagues, through our assurance process, indicating improved levels of satisfaction Increased rates of equipment utilisation
Control room capability	Customer feedback Feedback from colleagues Debrief outcomes Mobilising targets met Improved survival guidance call handling evidenced through exercises
Incident information management	Reduction in paper based systems Instant transmission of risk critical information across the incident ground All relevant incident information generated at scene held in a single case file Evidence of generation and retention of relevant information Evidence of consistent communication of information through incident handover
Operational Training Materials	Be able to rapidly amend all relevant training materials following changes to national guidance or internal guidance Training materials auditable, in date, and subject to programmed review Feedback from colleagues on training quality Analytics showing active use of training materials
Reducing Operational Risk	A reduction in injuries to our colleagues Evidence of best practice to reduce contaminants undertaken at all incidents
Productivity	Increases in completion rates for safe and well visits and response assessment visits Evidence of completion of station based training programme contributing to competence
Cross-border working	Active debriefs of over the border incidents demonstrating increased effectiveness

Priority four – Actively seek opportunities to improve what we do, against clear standards

- **Why do we need to do this?**

We will improve the way we serve our customers and support our partners by actively paying attention to what we can do to get better. We already have a well-used system in place for obtaining feedback from staff and capturing learning following incidents. And we will continue to value this system. But that is a reactive approach. We want to become proactive in the way we generate and use that information.

Everything we do will be judged against clear standards of response. A culture of exceeding these standards will be implemented to support a high quality of response.

We will seek out ways in which we can improve what we do, make changes, measure whether they have been successful, and continue to refine and improve. Our debriefing model is accredited with the Institution of Fire Engineers, ensuring all participating can accrue continuous professional development hours working towards their Institution of Fire Engineers qualifications. Our target will be to ensure that we learn before an incident happens, wherever possible.

We can also learn from the experience of others. We will continue to review and implement changes as a result of nationally significant events and findings, such as the Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena inquiries.

- **Achievements 2017-21**

- Established the Operational Assurance team
- Adopted the National Operational Learning Good Practice Guide
- Set up a process for reviewing and learning from critical incidents
- Implemented a feedback mechanism for colleagues to identify areas for improvement / areas of best practice
- Integrated Health and Safety reporting into our assurance process

- Utilised the Coroner's Prevention of Future Deaths reports from across the country, to identify issues others faced and ensure we learn from them

- **Where next?**

- Combine the elements of learning and assurance exercises to create a single integrated approach, using evidence to amend and improve what we do
- Establish a revised annual sign off of competence for operational staff
- Deliver an annual assessment of organisational competence in order to help benchmark how good we are at providing a quality service, reporting outcomes
- Create an environment where colleagues feel compelled to discuss professional issues and seek to improve
- Facilitate access to a professional qualification with the Institution of Fire Engineers for all relevant colleagues
- Embed changes as a result of learning from the Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena inquiries
- Embedding the learning from our experience during COVID into our day to day business
- Review our approach to actively gathering information at incidents, ensuring that we take a thematic approach through targeted assurance activities
- More critically assess the impact of our actions on customer outcomes rather than simply focusing on how we did when measured against procedures
- Actively seek more customer feedback on our performance, guiding responses to provide meaningful information we can use to critically evaluate and improve our service
- Improve the way we learn from occasions where colleagues have had to work outside of procedure to resolve an incident, known as 'operational discretion', in order to ensure we reduce risk to customers and colleagues
- Ensure our assurance processes align to national best practice

- **What does success look like?**

- Colleagues who feel more confident in their own professional practice
- Actively performance managing colleagues in line with the FirePro measure of competence
- All operational staff members of the Institution of Fire Engineers at Technician grade (or higher)
- A 'virtuous cycle' where measuring operational performance identifies where improvements are required, driving changes to what we do, and improving customer outcomes
- Well utilised competence recording system providing meaningful information for colleagues and intelligence for the service
- Increased levels of customer feedback and evidence of changes to improve our response

- **How will we measure performance against our objectives?**

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Competence	% of colleagues with TIFireE qualification or above % of colleagues classed as competent through annual FirePro process Incident command courses and revalidation pass rates
Learning from other events	Be able to evidence compliance with all recommendations from Grenfell and Manchester Arena enquiries
Standards	Be able to evidence compliance with all areas of Fire Standards

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PEOPLE PLAN 2021-2025

Foreword: Ann Millington Chief Executive



Dear Colleagues

In developing this new People strategy we have recognised how much great work has been done by everyone to make KFRS a great place to work. My

thanks for that sustained effort which has seen achievements in so many areas. The link between how we feel at work and how we best serve our customers is clear so we will continue in this next strategy period to work together to keep improving across a range of maturity areas. Your participation and voice is so critical to our success so please keep feeding in your ideas and commitment.

Kind Regards

Ann

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Section One

People Plan 2021-2025

We aim to improve organisational performance by ensuring that everyone has the right skills, capabilities and involvement to make life safer for the people of Kent.

Our 'people plan' delivers a structured approach to achieve this objective. The plan highlights the key areas we will focus on over the next four years and how we will support everyone in developing their potential and maximising their contribution.

The plan has been designed to support the organisation's overall Customer Safety Plan and to work in conjunction with all other organisational strategies and plans.

Delivery of this plan will ensure that the highest standards of leadership and management are in place to sustain a motivated and engaged workforce. We believe this will foster an organisational culture which truly embraces the diversity and individuality of people and the need for inclusiveness.

Through capable, motivated and resilient people, we will fulfil our statutory obligations in meeting the needs of the communities of Kent and Medway.

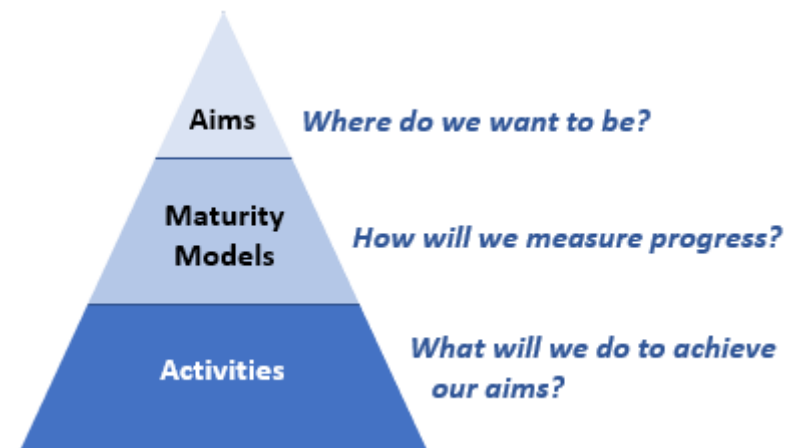
INTRODUCTION

How we have developed our plan

Whilst writing this plan the world is in unprecedented times. The Covid pandemic has affected everyone and will continue to have a significant impact on the way in which we all work.

In developing this plan we have considered this external environment, as well as the other challenges the organisation faces, in deciding priorities and key people activities over the next four years.

Our plan focuses on our key 'people' aims, the activities we will undertake to achieve these objectives and how we will measure progress (by using 'maturity models') over time.



Our Commitment to People

We are committed to supporting the well-being, development and reward of our people by providing a workplace where there is equality of opportunity, valuing of diversity and the promotion of a culture of inclusion.

Inclusion is at the heart of our 'people plan'. It is our aim to fully use people's skills and talents by creating an open and inclusive workplace culture so that everyone can work together with dignity, respect and truly feel valued.

Inclusivity means not 'just we're allowed to be there,' but we are valued. I've always said: smart teams will do amazing things, but truly diverse teams will do impossible things. *Claudia Brind-Woody Vice President & MD for Global Intellectual Property Licensing, IBM*

We want a work environment where our people are treated as individuals, not stereotyped or classified into a single social categorisation. We will therefore support and promote all aspects of our people to ensure that everyone has the equality of opportunity, is able to develop and to be themselves.

Diversity is what happens when you have representation of various groups in one place. Representation is what happens when groups that haven't previously been included, are included. Intersectionality is what happens when we do everything through the lens of making sure that no one is left behind. More than surface-level inclusion, or merely making sure everyone is represented, intersectionality is the practice of interrogating the power dynamics and rationales of how we can be together. *Alicia Garza, American activist.*

Through our recruitment strategy we will ensure that our processes are fair, objective and bias free. Our aim is to recruit and retain a diversity of applicants, who will bring with them a wealth of experiences and thinking.

"If you haven't got the best talent you're not going to be the best, if you're not representing properly the available pool of talent then you're missing an opportunity". *Alex Wilmot-Sitwell partner at Perella Weinberg Partners*

Our leaders will be central to creating an open and inclusive culture. We will develop and support them to be successful, competent and professional leaders, who will create an environment where others are able to express themselves, be free to voice their opinions and to be themselves.

"Good leadership requires you to surround yourself with people of diverse perspectives who can disagree with you without fear of retaliation" *-Doris Kearns Goodwin – biographer and historian*

We will support all colleagues through learning and awareness to eliminate bias and prejudice in the workplace and give everyone the skills to robustly challenge and manage inappropriate behaviour.

Our plan we will therefore support a workplace that:

- Encourages a sense of belonging, so that everyone feels able to come to work and be themselves.
- Supports the well-being of all, where there is no fear of bias or prejudice, so that everyone feels safe and accepted.
- Reflects the community that we serve.

- Allows everyone the opportunity to voice their concerns, thoughts and challenge without reprisal.
- Supports a culture of positive psychological well-being.
- Gives a sense of value and respects where all feel rewarded, developed and appreciated.
- Supports and develops all to understand the value of equality and diversity.
- Encourages the involvement of everyone in the design and development of their work environment.
- Develops managers to be able to promote and encourage inclusion within the workplace.

This commitment is the foundation of our plan.

External Influences

There are many external influences that will impact on the world of work over the next four years.



Economy – the UK faces a long road to recovery in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is likely to be significant pressure on public funds in a post Covid world. For us this will mean how we can best deliver our services whilst looking after our

workforce. We will need to be transparent regarding the budgetary pressure we face as an organisation and encourage involvement in designing new ways of working.



Technology – There is a major push towards a digital approach to service delivery and self-service. We now need to build on what we have learnt through Covid to explore how technology could support our customers and create efficiencies.



Environmental pressure – The reduction of our carbon footprint through our working practices e.g. reducing commute with home working and better use of technology.



Societal differences are increasing and are exacerbated by rising unemployment (particularly younger and older), aging population, digital divide and various community cohesion issues. We need to be conscious of these divides and recognise them in the delivery of our services.



Well-being issues are becoming more complex in a challenging world. Access to healthcare will be difficult over the next few years. We therefore need to factor into our planning how we might bridge that gap.



On-going changes in Pension legislation could have an effect on establishment numbers. This may result in a loss of expertise in a short period and require greater investment in recruitment.



The nature of work itself and its balance with life are being tested by changing aspirations of new generations. Covid has shown that we can work differently.

Our Key Aims

In considering our commitment to people and these external influences, we have identified six key aims within our plan. We believe that identifying these priorities we will help create the workplace we are driving to achieve.

1. To attract, identify, retain and develop high performing employees in order to best serve our customer

4. To develop and support the growth of leaders to facilitate transformational change

2. To enable the development of high - performance culture in which everyone is supported, rewarded, developed and managed effectively

5. Embed a supportive culture which is inclusive, positive, and fair which enables people to reach their potential.

3. Together continue to cultivate an environment of positive health and good wellbeing, where people are engaged and valued for what they do.

6. To support a work environment which promotes flexibility and harnesses the benefits of using the latest technology

How do we intend to achieve our aims?

In order to deliver these aims over the next four years we have identified a series of key people activities. These will support some, or all, of the aims either directly or indirectly.

Our key activities will be:



Data – to improve collection and use of data to support workforce development. Creating business focused analysis of data to identify trends, areas for improvement and support performance.



Sense of belonging – to further develop our workplace to support well-being, improve employee engagement and eliminate bias or prejudice specifically in recruitment and promotion processes.



Employee Experience – to promote diversity of thinking, encourage a culture of open debate, creativity and collective problem solving. To take the next steps towards engagement/participation so there is joint ownership of change.



Leadership – to continue to advance our leaders as role models who promote a culture of inclusion, professionalism and ownership. Through a coaching and continuous dialogue feedback enable everyone to have a voice, own their learning and focus on customer needs.



Talent & Career Management – to enhance our current processes so that they support effective workforce planning and provide a variety of opportunities for all colleagues to develop their potential.



Learning Environment – to support the learning of all by expanding our blended learning approach, building on professionalism and encouraging individual ownership of learning.



Contractual flexibility – to explore how contractual flexibility could promote and encourage greater empowerment, support improved well-being and attract a greater diversity of applicants.

In the second section of this plan, these activities will be explored in more detail. We will examine what has already been and then identify specific pieces of work that will be undertaken in the next four years so that we can achieve our overarching aims.

An integral part of our plan will be how we measure 'success' and assure ourselves that we have met our aims. To do this we will use our newly designed 'maturity models'.

Maturity Models

There are ten 'maturity models' (Appendix 1). These models will:

- Enable us to develop a 'gap analysis' against recognised widely accepted models of best practice.
- Provide a roadmap to becoming a leading practice organisation.
- Allow measurement and benchmarking of internal progress.
- Assist our explanations of these organisational concepts to all colleagues, leaders, and Members

We have developed our models through a consultation process where everyone was invited in be involved. The consultation focused on:

- Validating the language within the models ensuring common understanding and relevance.
- Collectively evaluating the organisation's current level of competence/maturity in each specified area.
- Collectively identifying the organisational aspiration level over the next 1-4 years, which then drives the key aims and activities of our 'people plan'.

Looking forward we intend to use these maturity levels to measure the success of the 'people plan' over the next four years.

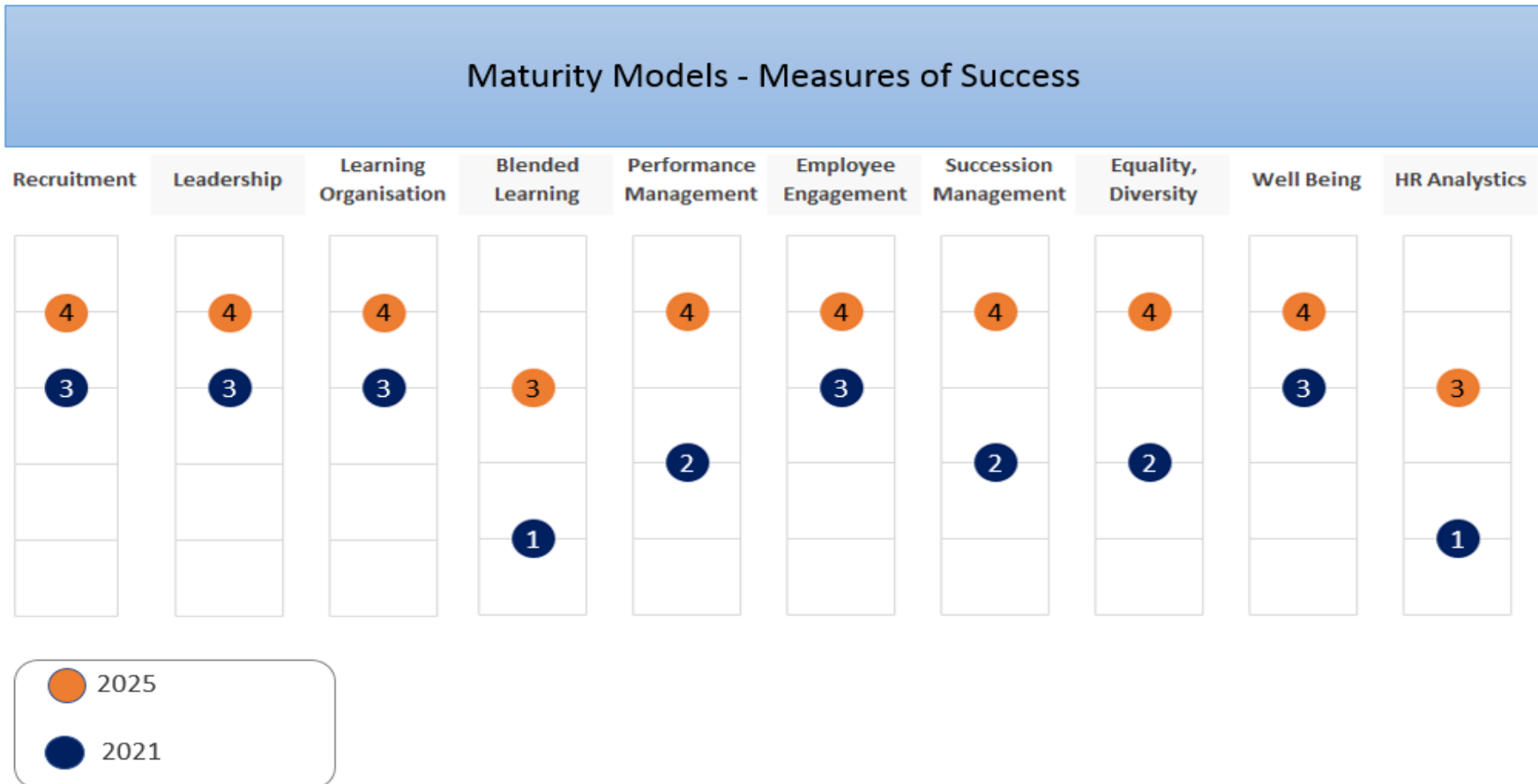
So how does this all come together? Remember our triangle?



Our activities and our maturity models will support us achieving our aims. The work we undertake will enable us to get to the next maturity model level which in turn supports us to achieve our overarching strategic aims.

What does success look like?

Through consultation we have agreed our current and aspired levels within the Maturity Models. These levels will be one of the main ways by which we will access the success of this plan. This table details these levels.



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Section Two – Key Activities – People Plan 2021-2025

People Activity - Data - *to improve the collection and use of data to support workforce development. Creating business focused analysis of data to identify trends, areas for improvement and support performance.*

Where we have come from.

People Plan 2017 - 2021

There was not a specific strategic objective in the People Plan 2017-2021 regarding data. Although a number of planned activities did focus on data collection and started to consider how this data could be used to support workforce planning and development.

We have evaluated our current position within the HR Analytics Maturity level as being level 1 (operational reporting).

We recognise that there is lots more to do here and this is why we have set this as one of our primary objectives for the 2021-2025 plan.

Achievements

Introduced:

- Corporate Absence Review Board to give strategic overview of long and short-term absence.
- Cancellation reporting and Expiry Tracking to ensure our employees core skills are current.
- Annual checks in place to ensure no-one is out of ticket for any skills.
- Moodle Reporting is done regularly to track employee progress on online content.
- A trauma tracker to identify early exposure to potential traumatic events.
- A monthly operational establishment planning group – quarterly reporting to establishment of 2 year rolling operational recruitment
- Talent Benchmarking Review (TBR) process.

Published:

- Gender Pay Data government guidelines.
- Ethnicity & Disability pay data before mandated by government
- Awareness campaigns to improve declaration of personal data
- Internal surveys e.g. continuous dialogue, role of a manager

Improved service delivery:

- People Impact Assessments (PIA) to support organisational change, policies development and project development.
- Use of third-party provider data to manage and support organisational change & development.
- Introduction of weekly crewing meetings to evaluate future availability and reduce overtime.

Measures of Success

- Maintained sickness absences - Local Performance Indicator within target for the 5-year period
- Gender pay for March 19 and March 20 showed a marginal advantage for women.
- 10% uptake of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Helpline support, of which 94.9% is counselling calls – 58% mental health related.
- Budget saving of £60K in wellbeing budget for 20/21.
- On average 12% of successful wholetime applicants were female.
- On average xx% of successful on-call applicants were female

Current Maturity Model Levels

Recruitment	3
Learning organisation	3
Talent Management	2
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	2
Wellbeing	3
HR Analytics	1

People Activity - Data - *to improve the collection and use of data to support workforce development. Creating business focused analysis of data to identify trends, areas for improvement and support performance.*

Where next? People Plan 2021-2025

We want our data to:

- support organisational change
- help us to understand our customer's needs (internally & externally)
- improved our own wellbeing
- create a safe and inclusive workplace
- support everyone to maintain their competency

We believe this will support us to:

- Be transparent in the make-up of our workforce.
- Integrate talent management and career succession into our establishment planning.
- Support cultural change.
- Empower leaders to make objective and informed decisions to identify and implement change.
- Support all employees to know what they need to do to remain current in skills.
- Inform recruitment, induction and retention.
- Support organisational and individual learning.

Proposed Activities

To develop:

- Definition of the organisational data requirements for Human Resources (HR) and Learning to support organisational improvements and decision making.
- A tool or tools by which managers can view and analyse people related data to support:
 - wellbeing
 - performance management
 - rostering/workforce planning
 - training expired or current
 - decision making
 - improved productivity and performance
 - competency
- A tool or tools by which the organisation can ensure Working Time Compliance for its workforce
- A process by which we can measure return on investment and expectations from learning programmes to support performance.
- An evaluation process by which to measure the effectiveness of positive action activity

To improved service delivery:

- Implementation of Time & Attendance system
- Development of an improved Training Recording/Booking System

Measures of Success

- Increased application for wholetime and on-call roles from women & other underrepresented groups - %?
- Improved disclosure of personal data from % to %
- Less than 5% expired for skills at any one time.

Maturity Model Aspiration by 2025

Recruitment	4
Learning organisation	4
Talent Management	4
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	4
Wellbeing	4
HR Analytics	3

People Activity – Sense of Belonging

to further develop our workplace to support well-being, improve employee engagement and eliminate bias or prejudice specifically in recruitment and promotion processes.

Where we have come from. People Plan 2017 - 2021

Our previous plan focused on creating a great place to work by:

- Developing cultural values and behaviours to support inclusive and fair practice
- Together creating a work environment that enables us to be able to bring ourselves to work.
- Diversifying our teams to better represent our communities through fair and inclusive recruitment practices
- Embedding an understanding of the impact on people of our activities and practices through People Impact Assessments (PIA).
- Improving internal awareness and ownership of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- Providing comprehensive wellbeing support
- Creating an environment where individuals can seek support for health and wellbeing concerns

Achievements

Introduced:

- Inclusion Officer role
- Wellbeing Manager role
- Associate Training Coaches
- Wellbeing Champions network
- 24/7 out of hours Wellbeing support through Welfare Support Officers
- LGBT Network of models and allies

Published:

- Financial Wellbeing Policy
- Oscar Kilo wellbeing accredited
- Internal and External Customer Promise

Improved Service Delivery:

- Embedded the use PIAs into projects, work activities and change processes.
- Created On-Call and Wholtime (WT) Liaison role in Learning and Development to enable support where needed.
- Included EDI as a specific question within all recruitment interviews to support the embedding of organisational EDI understanding.

Training and awareness

- Suicide Prevention training for all teams
- Monthly Inclusion awareness programme
- Review of learning activities to include customer awareness activities
- Managers trained in Mental Health First Aid were able to provide day to day support to their teams

Measures of Success

- Gender pay for March 19 and March 20 showed a marginal advantage for women.
- 10% uptake of Employee Assistance Helpline support, of which 94.9% is counselling calls – 58% mental health related.
- On average 12% of successful wholtime applicant's female.
- On average xx% of successful on-call applicant's female
- Feedback on realism of face to face courses has shown employees are more engaged with them.
- Developed PIAs for key operational activities which were adopted nationally
- Developed Equality of Access Case studies which have been adopted nationally.
- We have xxx trained in Mental Health First Aid

Current Maturity Model Levels

Recruitment	3
Leadership Development	3
Learning Organisation	3
Blended Learning	1
Performance Management	2
Employee Recognition & Engagement	3
Talent management	2
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	2
Wellbeing	3
HR Analytics	1

People Activity – Sense of Belonging

to further develop our workplace to support well-being, improve employee engagement and eliminate bias or prejudice specifically in recruitment and promotion processes.

Where next?

People Plan 2021-2025

Our focus will be:

- Continue to develop all teams understanding and awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- To enable new joiners to get in, fit in and get on.
- To ensure that all people processes are free from bias, are objective and fair.
- Build our employee brand to reflect who we are so that applicants consider us as a good employer
- For our workforce to be more representative of the communities we support.
- For our leaders to role model inclusive behaviours, encouraging their teams to have a voice.
- Together creating a workplace where everyone feels valued and has a sense of belonging
- Continue to remove stigma of mental health through education and support.
- Challenging any unacceptable behaviour and irresponsible use of social media.
- Adapting our working environment and practices to support a multigenerational workforce

We believe this will support us to:

- Improve productivity, motivation and efficiency.
- Improve the diversity of the organisation
- Reduce sickness
- Eliminating all bullying & harassment claims
- Increase individual's resilience and psychological wellbeing

- Create customer focused service solutions.

Proposed Activities

Research on:

- The impact on long term injuries to consider if these have resulted in long term medical conditions.

Policy development and implementation:

- Youth Engagement and Employability Policy to support NFCC Young People agenda.
- Embed the Financial Wellbeing Policy.
- Drug & Alcohol Policy including addition support for addiction
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Training and awareness programme to support Domestic Violence policy
- Delivery of the Neurodiversity Commitment

Improve Service Delivery:

- Embed the new employee brand into people focused working practices and processes.
- Continue to embed PIA and Equality of Access into service delivery, including a robust monitoring and evaluation process.
- Evaluate the organisations understanding of inclusion to support the development an on-going learning strategy for inclusion
- Enhance the modular firefighter programmes to enable individuals to perform better and sooner.
- Identify and remove potential barriers in our recruitment process.
- Further develop our internal networks to support an integrated approach to support creating an inclusive culture.
- Create communities that enable learners to solve problems together.
- Explore how to embed social mobility into our monitoring and procedures e.g. recruitment.

Measures of Success

- Gender Pay – to continue to demonstrate our marginal difference within gender pay
- Equal Pay – shows no significant equal pay issues
- Increased usage of mental health service from % to %
- Increased usage of EAP service for % to % in particular increased use for financial issues
- To successfully achieve the following awards:
 - Stonewall index
 - Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) Wellbeing award
- Increased application for wholetime and on-call roles from women & other underrepresented groups
- Increased feedback from stations on the development and integration of employees.
- Increased number of successful applicants for wholetime roles from women and other underrepresented groups
- Greater informal learning networks present.
- Reduce unhandled/out of process sickness to %
- Zero Bullying and Harassment cases

Maturity Model Aspiration Levels by 2025

Recruitment	4
Leadership Development	4
Learning Organisation	4
Blended Learning	3
Performance Management	4
Employee Recognition & Engagement	4
Talent management	4
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	4
Wellbeing	4
HR Analytics	3

People Activity – Employee Experience - to promote diversity of thinking, encourage a culture of open debate, creativity and collective problem solving. To take the next steps towards engagement/participation so there is joint ownership of change.

Where we have come from

People Plan 2017-2021

Employee Experience was not defined as a specific strategic objective in the previous People Plan and separate work streams which now form part of this objective, were previously headed as Wellbeing, Cultural Values and Behaviours.

Achievements

Introduced:

- Annual resilience and wellbeing conferences
- Menopause awareness workshops
- Safeguarding training for all teams
- Feeling valued survey
- Confidential line to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) to discuss any bullying and harassment concerns
- Online induction programme to welcome new employees.
- L&D Professionalisation Programme to clearly develop L&D professionals.
- Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) Training Facility at Ramsgate
- Associate Training Coaches to provide closer station support
- Modular trainee Firefighter course to get learners to stations sooner
- Staff Forum to represent views of the Corporate Teams

Achieved:

- Oscar Kilo accreditation
- Supported NFCC with Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) training and development of the national EIA template.

Published:

- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Provisions for Carers (Carers Agreements)
- Enhanced maternity and paternity provisions
- Speak Up Policy to encourage everyone to freely raise issues and offer feedback
- Portfolio of Covid-19 policies supporting employees and managers

Improved service delivery:

- All services offered to our customers and employees consider impacts of protected characteristics, in addition to other relevant factors

Measures of success

- Continuous dialogue survey received **x** number of responses indicating that people were receiving regular feedback
- Existing structures supporting employee wellbeing were rated very highly by employees and HMICFRS during the pandemic
- Pro-active management of all aspects of employee wellbeing during the pandemic, resulting in reduction in absence levels by **xxx%** (except Covid-19 related)
- All L&D staff are able to access courses as part of the professionalisation programme.
- Most Stations have at least one associate training coach.
- Feedback on new wholetime pathway has been good.
- Successful Wholetime recruitment campaign carried out remotely
- On-call recruitment continued throughout Covid
- Outcome of valuing staff survey **xxx**
- ACAS wellbeing line was contacted by **xxx** individuals, no specific issues raised
- EAP usage
- Occupational Health (OH) usage
- Think action (urgent wellbeing triage) usage

Current Maturity Model Levels

Recruitment	3
Leadership Development	3
Learning Organisation	3
Employee Recognition & Engagement	3
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	2
Wellbeing	3

People Activity – Employee Experience - to promote diversity of thinking, encourage a culture of open

debate, creativity and collective problem solving. To take the next steps towards engagement/participation so there is joint ownership of change

Where next?

People Plan 2021-2025

Employee Experience will focus on reinventing our workplaces and how we interact in the post-pandemic reality.

Hybrid working i.e. working across different locations including home, is going to become more of a norm. We will therefore need to ensure that all elements of the employee experience can be delivered in person and virtually, supported by the appropriate skill sets, internal processes and technology.

We want our learning facilities to provide the best possible experiences; whether that is simulated or live. This will enable us to continue to train as we respond.

We will focus on maintaining employees' engagement and our culture through the development of solutions which offer instant feedback, recognition and promote communications between teams working remotely.

We believe this will support us to:

- Develop hybrid work solutions balancing personal preferences and needs with teams' objectives
- Maintain employee satisfaction and engagement levels
- Enable new and existing employees to learn by experience and safely fail.
- Enable new and existing employees to become or be identified as subject matter experts in their knowledge areas.
- Develop trust and ability to effectively manage teams working according to a hybrid model

- Improve resilience and wellbeing
- Improve employee retention/career movement
- Encourage employee involvement through participation and consultation.
- Improve diversity of thinking and contribution
- Further improve productivity and quality of our services through recognition and reward

Proposed Activities

Develop:

- Culture of open debate, creativity and collective problem solving e.g. Action Learning Sets
- Environment where everyone has a voice and can contribute their ideas
- Implement new License to Recruit Programme to ensure we operate fair and bias free practices
- Reward and Recognition Policy
- Employer of Choice Policy
- Employer Brand supporting our recruitment objectives
- Programme to ensure that there is greater involvement in projects from all teams
- Workplace stress assessment
- Research potential wellbeing concerns in under-represented groups
- Investigate the impacts of Long-term impact of Covid on operational fitness and health.

Improved service delivery:

- New Employer Brand is going to support our Positive Action and the delivery of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Improve learning at the point of need resources, enabling individuals to get what they need when they need it.
- Review recruitment process to remove potential barriers to applicants.

- Ashford Live Fire Facility and New L&D Facilities provide a better simulated and live experience to train new employees.

Research

- The impact of disturbed sleep in shift workers
- Explore the use of Chat-box technology to support customer experience.

Measures of Success

- Measures relating to wellbeing....HSE Stress Assessment, family survey exploring support?
- Measures relating to EDI
- Positive feedback from training courses
- Positive feedback from stations around realism of courses.
- Recruitment stats
- Outcomes of the Reinventing Work project – employee wellbeing, engagement levels measured periodically after its implementation

Maturity Model Aspiration Levels by 2025

Recruitment	4
Leadership Development	4
Learning Organisation	4
Employee Recognition & Engagement	4
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	4
Wellbeing	4

People activity – Leadership - to continue to advance our leaders as role models who promote a culture of inclusion, professionalism and ownership. Through a coaching and continuous dialogue feedback enable everyone to have a voice, own their learning and focus on customer needs.

Where we have come from People Plan 2017 - 2021

We want the best leaders, but recognise that all the answers, including best practice can't be gained from just looking inside our organisation.

The People Plan focussed on the creation of leaders, and the early stages of development of them. We have now created a stable foundation on which to develop our leadership as an organisation, including the integration of refined leadership roles such as that of station leaders.

We have started our leadership development journey with dedicated programmes that are starting to now be rolled out on a larger scale.

Achievements

Introduced:

- 5 Level Inspiring Leadership Programme to support leaders at all levels.
- Bite sized leadership development content
- Bursary Scheme launched to enable people to achieve qualifications they have not been previously able to.
- LinkedIn Learning launched in October 2020, enabling online access to leadership development content.
- Talent Benchmarking Review process
- Quarterly Flexible Duty System, Continuous Professional Development Days, sharing learning and best practice across command groups.

Published:

- Managers Online Toolkits to support with regular people challenges
- Senior Management Ethical Code of Conduct that all Heads of Department, Area Managers and above have signed.
- Officers Framework, together with leadership expectations for newly promoted Station Managers.
- Supervisory Managers guide for newly promoted Crew Leaders.

Improved Service Delivery:

- Fire Futures and Corporate Team Seminars now monthly and online to share information better.
- Manager's discussion topics shared monthly with managers to support to debate of corporate messages through team meetings.

Measures of Success

- Bursary Scheme launched in 2018 and has had £XXX spend towards leadership qualifications since launch.
- XXX people have been through Core Leadership Programme and XXX through Advanced Leadership Programme since its 2019 launch.
- 232 have accessed LinkedIn activities

Current Maturity Model Levels

Leadership Development	3
Learning Organisation	3
Blended Learning	1
Performance Management	2
Talent Management	2
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	2
Wellbeing	3
HR Analytics	1

People activity – Leadership - to continue to advance our leaders as role models who promote a culture of inclusion, professionalism and ownership. Through a coaching and continuous dialogue feedback enable everyone to have a voice, own their learning and focus on customer needs.

Where next?

People Plan 2021-2025

We want our leaders to:

- Be ready and capable to do the job, own their role and know what is expected as a leaders.
- Understand their own development needs.
- Be the right people with the right skills.
- Be flexible and meet future challenges and plan for it.
- Create an environment where everyone can thrive.
- Support their teams to take responsibility for their own engagement with the organisation

We believe this will support us to:

- Further develop our culture to be no blame, open and challenging, where no discussion topic is taboo, and curiosity is encouraged.
- A culture of positive psychological wellbeing
- Create leaders who own and encourage inclusion in the workplace.
- Develop leaders who are successful, competent and professional

Proposed Activities

- Widening the Inspiring Leadership Programme to support all leaders, managers and remote/distanced people leadership.
- Continue to embed a culture of continuous dialogue, performance management and coaching.
- Use Leadership behaviours framework for coaching.
- Further encourage a culture of open debate, creativity and collective problem solving of current and future challenge, using Action Learning Sets, conferences etc.
- Continuous development is at the forefront of our people's minds, with support available through platforms and materials.
- Leaders are developed as workplace assessors to coach, guide, support and measure employee performance.
- Enhance leader level learning on operational, professional and people skills.
- Leaders encourage self-led learning by all.
- Promote diversity of thought through role modelling, develop understanding through leadership framework.
- Focus on how meetings are facilitated to hear everyone's voice.
- Introducing monthly CPD webinars for all Incident commanders to share learning, best practice and support station based training.
- Creation of Leadership Development Team to provide more dedicated support.
- Develop programme of learning to support better organisational and governance skills for leaders e.g. budget management, project & programme management/sponsorship, report writing.

- Review our Leadership Behaviours to embed inclusion, our culture, building team trust and emotional intelligence.

Measures of success

- Continuous dialogue survey Jan 21
- Development of Action Learning Sets programme – proposal CMB Feb
- Provide managers with opportunities to develop skills to manage and develop hybrid teams, incl. maintaining wellbeing, engagement and org. culture
- All leaders have undertaken workplace assessor training and actively support employees locally in performance.
- All leaders have access to professional and people skills development.
- Numbers in the Advanced Leadership Programme
- How many in the Advanced Leadership Programme get promoted

Maturity Model Aspiration Levels by 2025

Leadership Development	4
Learning Organisation	4
Blended Learning	3
Performance Management	4
Talent Management	4
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	4
Wellbeing	4
HR Analytics	3

People Activity – Talent Management and Career Succession - to enhance our current processes so that they support effective workforce planning and provide a variety of opportunities for everyone to develop their potential.

Where we have come from

People Plan 2017 - 2021

During the period of this People Plan we have put in place a structured process by which to effectively manage our workforce planning.

At the centre of this work has been the introduction of a Talent Benchmarking Review (TBR) process, which involves a career aspiration conversation with everyone at least once a year. Therefore, giving us a better, timely understanding of our workforce pressures and requirements.

Achievements Introduced:

- Talent Bench Review being used for firefighters to identify those are ready for promotion or with support those that could be promoted.
- An annual career aspiration conversation which seeks to understanding future development needs and to anticipate future workforce pressures.
- Modularised trainee development course to take a more vocational approach to developing firefighters and getting resource to station sooner.
- Development posts in place across the organisation to enable individuals to gain experience at crew leader level.
- Review of station-based roles e.g. expectations, viability of Station leader model, work with operational managers and roll out of new Integrated Learning Assurance Model (ILAM)

Published:

- Online induction programme for corporate teams

Improved Service Delivery:

- Introduction of Operational Readiness Group who closely monitor operational workforce levels, feeding theses directly into Establishment Group
- Achieved Institute of Fire Engineers corporate membership

Measures of Success

- XXX% of new joining corporate team members have been through the online induction programme since its launch.
- XX promoted within 1 year of being identified for promotion

Current Maturity Model Levels

Recruitment	3
Leadership Development	3
Learning Organisation	3
Talent Management	2
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	2
Wellbeing	3

People Activity – Talent Management and Career Succession - to enhance our current processes so that they support effective workforce planning and provide a variety of opportunities for everyone to develop their potential.

Where next?

People Plan 2021-2025

We want our talent management & career succession to:

- Enable us to attract, select and retain high performing individuals.
- Develop the right skills at the right time to enable us to maintain critical roles across the service.
- Identify those individuals with potential early so they can be supported to develop and meet their career aspirations.
- Support us to proactively manage career succession and workforce planning.
- Developing a culture where together everyone undertakes self-led learning throughout their career.

We believe this will support us to:

- Create a positive working culture where individuals perform to the best of their ability because they are valued, developed and competent and feel they belong.
- Create an effective workforce planning process which reduces establishment overheads e.g. reduction in overtime
- Plan for the loss of knowledge either through retention or career succession that identifies risk critical position.
- Create workplace where barriers are identified and removed to ensure the right leaders are come through.

Proposed Activities

- Review of non-operational Talent Benchmark Review through consultation with stakeholders.
- Continued driving of professional membership achievement & maintenance. (e.g Institute of Fire Engineers)
- Licence to recruit training course to be rolled out to make recruiting clearer and simpler.
- Integrated induction programme that is applicable to all teams.
- Enable individuals to self-develop, maintain currency and own their own learning.
- Development of a Talent Management Framework to create a Corporate Teams understanding of career and the support available for progression.
- Embedding of continuous performance conversations and performance management, considering hybrid working.
- Development of an accelerated progression pathway.
- Improved collation of data to measure and evaluate talent management processes.
- Considering how we build and use talent pools.

Measures of success

- Talent Bench Review process meets the needs of all in KFRS
- The cost of recruiting a person has decreased from £XXX
- 100% of new joining corporate team and firefighter roles have been through the induction programme.
- 100% of colleagues who require professional body membership in their role have achieved it.
- XXX promoted in year following being identified for promotion
- XX completed the License to recruit course

Maturity Model Aspiration Levels by 2025

Recruitment	4
Leadership Development	4
Learning Organisation	4
Talent Management	4
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	4
Wellbeing	4

People Activity – Learning environment - to support the learning of all by expanding our blended learning approach, building on professionalism and encouraging individual ownership of learning.

Where we have come from

People Plan 2017 - 2021

During this period of the People Plan we have created a wider blended learning environment in which to support learning beyond the classroom.

- Started creating a supportive learning environment ensures that people learn safely and without fear to be the best they can be.

We have created opportunities where skills can be practiced regularly as this will support them being remembered and applied. Through this, we recognise that sometimes people may make mistakes, but this is okay, if they are continuing to develop.

Multiple routes of learning have been created to encourage individual ownership whether through external professional qualifications achieved through the bursary scheme. Or smaller scale Continuous Professional Development events and in-the-moment learning through webinars.

With the creation of a no-blame debrief environment; learning environments have begun to be created that allow open, honest critical reviews of activities and how we can improve.

Achievements

Introduced:

- Debrief process to identify what can be done better next time at incidents.
- Benefits mapping for projects. To provide a supportive framework for project managers to prevent repeat mistakes.
- 4 Continuous Professional Development (CPD) days per year for corporate teams.
- Improved Blended Learning platform on Moodle
- Talent Benchmarking Review to identify those ready for promotion or with potential – individual development plan to support this progression.
- Professional pathways e.g. Learning & Development and building safety.
- Alignment to Fire Standards across all learning programmes.
- Implementation of new Moodle and learning design tools.
- A better approach to evaluation of learning.
- Review of learning materials to consider impact on customers in delivery.

Improved Service Delivery:

- Ops Assurance feedback continuously highlights both developmental and good areas of learning.
- Learning & Development commissioning process to manage work priorities for the team.

Measures of Success

- We sourced simple authoring tools to enable all that work in KFRS to participate in developing online learning.
- We procured two online learning platforms to support self-led and group led learning (Moodle and LinkedIn Learning).
- £60k is used each year to support applications to the bursary scheme.
- Open feedback is actively sourced, and challenge is welcomed.

Current Maturity Model Levels

Leadership	3
Learning Organisation	3
Blended Learning	1
Performance Management	2
Employee Recognition & Engagement	3
Wellbeing	3
HR Analytics	1

People Activity – Learning environment - to support the learning of all by expanding our blended learning approach, building on professionalism and encouraging individual ownership of learning.

Where next?

People Plan 2021-2025

We want our learning environment to be:

- Supportive and recognising continuous professional learning throughout our career.
- Enabling individuals to stay current in their knowledge, and own their development and learning.
- Available for all to access, across multiple platforms and multiple media.
- Performance is self and peer assessed, with regular feedback supporting both individual and team development.
- Poor performance is identified, interventions used in the early stages and coaching is used to support.
- Future focussed, calling upon both tried and tested methods, but also utilising the latest technology and trends, to ensure we get the right learning at the right time.

We believe this will support:

- A culture of learning, in which people hold accountability for what they are learning and remaining current.
- A variety of blended by default learning solutions, where all learners can access what they need without necessarily needing to attend a face to face course.
- An environment in which people are aware of their performance and are not afraid to ask for feedback.

Proposed Activities

- Supporting Integrated Learning and assurance approach (ILAM).
- All learning programmes are blended by default.
- Embedding new technology in how we develop and deliver learning e.g. VR.
- Incident Command Simulation becomes more commonplace and varied.
- Wider assessment opportunities that are inclusive by design that enable individuals to learn and be tested in varied ways.
- Continue to recognise neurodiversity in learning and provide varied support mechanisms for all employees.
- Utilise what we learnt from COVID-19 and ensuring the environment created thereafter supports learning.
- Upskilling individuals to be more than competent when using technology to enable flexibility.
- Action Learning Sets alongside other team interventions support integrating learning culture.
- Coaching & Mentoring is widely used, laced through the leadership programmes.
- We actively use case studies to learn from other organisations inside and outside of the fire sector.
- Inclusivity and customer service is integrated within all learning programmes to ensure the learning environment is supportive of all.
- Seeking feedback as a result of large-scale programmes such as recruitment, promotion/development processes to embed and do better.
- Utilise HR and Talent Bench data to provide evidenced based feedback on performance.

- Evaluation is used at multiple levels to ensure effective customer service delivery and feedback is actionable.
- Development pathways are built to enable clearer pathways for all teams.
- Further roll out of professionalism and competency frameworks.
- Support managers and individuals to be able to work effectively in a remote workplace.

Measures of success

- All operational individuals are current in their pathway with ILAM or in a development plan
- Confidence, performance and feedback supports better Incident Commander Performance.
- Mandatory learning packages are at 95% or higher. With people actively owning their own learning.
- Online Self-led learning is adapted to meet needs (including re-procurement of platform in December 2023)
- Self-Led Learning is actively undertaken, with over 95% of the users accessing online learning. (E.g. LinkedIn Learning / Moodle). Individuals can describe what their learning gaps are.
- All recently promoted leaders in the last six months have been on a stage of the Inspiring Leadership Programme.

Maturity Model Aspiration Levels by 2025

Leadership Development	4
Learning Organisation	4
Blended Learning	3
Performance Management	4
Employee Recognition & Engagement	4
Wellbeing	4

People Activity - Contractual Flexibility

Creation of flexible work systems and contractual solutions that support wellbeing, equality of opportunity and attract more diverse pools of applicants.

Where we have come from

People Plan 2017-2021

Our objectives focused on implementing new solutions for the stations, including new duty system, management structure and review of On Call pay.

We also introduced new approaches to our established recruitment processes, for example opening traditionally firefighter roles to more diverse groups of non-operational applicants or introduction of market premiums for difficult to recruit and specialist roles.

Achievements

Introduced:

- First Wholetime recruitment campaign since 2007
- Flexible Rostering Duty System
- Review of Flexible Rota System
- Enhanced pay and leave provisions for parents
- Carers Agreements
- Secondment opportunities to partner organisations e.g. South East Coast Ambulance Service, National Health Service
- Homeworker Agreements outlining terms and conditions changed during the pandemic
- Station Leader structure
- Operational Group structure

Reviewed:

- On Call pay elements which have been simplified and consolidated
- Pay levels and market forces affecting recruitment to specialist roles within the IT team
- All operational roles and requirements (new Job description/ Person Specification)

Improved service delivery:

- New duty system for the shift stations, station and Group structures support organisational objectives such as reduction of overtime and resilience
- Conversion of firefighter roles into Corporate Team terms and conditions to encourage greater and more diverse applicant pool
- We can offer competitive terms and conditions and attract applicants to specialist IT roles

Measures of Success

- Objectives delivered moving away from the traditional duty system to a Flexi-Rostering Duty System e.g. savings, reduction of establishment across wholetime stations.
- All individuals who needed Carers Agreements have benefitted.
- Numbers of people seconded to partnering organisations
- Number of roles converted from Firefighter to corporate team Terms and Conditions.

Current Maturity Model Levels

Recruitment	3
Leadership	3
Learning Organisation	3
Blended Learning	1
Employee Recognition & Engagement	2
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	2
Wellbeing	3

People Activity - Contractual Flexibility

Creation of flexible work systems and contractual solutions that support wellbeing, equality of opportunity and attract more diverse pools of applicants.

Where next?

People Plan 2021-2025

We want to embrace opportunities arising from the post-pandemic reality, to incorporate our learning during this period to move away from our current traditional work structures e.g. office based.

We will achieve this through working together to in our teams to co-design new working contract which encourage flexibility and hybrid/remote working. These contract will remain Service delivery focused and will designed to meet both organisational and team needs.

Through greater flexibility we will be able to consider individual wellbeing and caring needs, encourage a wider pool of job applicants and adapt our working environment and practices to support a multigenerational workforce.

We will also continue to improve our understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion to identify proactive steps we can take to address any disadvantage or improve customer's experience.

We believe this will support:

- Outcomes of the Reinventing Work project and create of flexible culture
- Our competitiveness on the job market
- Perception of the Service as a progressive and modern employer
- Our Employer Brand
- Quality of sensitive data we collate and its use to support our EDI policy and commitments
- General wellbeing and engagement levels

Proposed Activities

Develop IT and processes to support:

- Transition to a paperless workplace
- Removal of time-consuming paper based transactions
- Increased focus on customer needs
- Give individuals space to own their learning and get involved with other activities e.g. projects

Redesign our working environment to:

- Create supportive & empowering line management
- Improve home/work flexibility & balance
- Support changing caring demands
- Improve wellbeing

Improve our understanding of:

- Social mobility
- Design of flexible jobs
- Management of people with diverse needs in different locations
- How to foster engagement, wellbeing and inclusion for all employees in the hybrid work environment

Review

- Complete the review of on-call contractual and pay arrangements
- Review of senior managers grading
- Review of job evaluation process
- Explore performance related pay

Measures of Success

IT and supporting processes

- All hybrid teams have paperless solutions in place
- People Impact Assessments will be carried out on all key HR/recruitment processes and solutions

Outcomes for job applicants

- Improved customer satisfaction / feedback from new employees
- Improved diversity of applicants attracted by the Service
- Improved diversity of applicants appointed by the service e.g. from under-represented minorities e.g. disabled, social mobility

Wellbeing of existing teams

- Improved engagement e.g. measures relating to satisfaction with hybrid solutions in place such as line management, feedback, objectives setting, productivity levels, satisfaction
- Improved wellbeing e.g. measured by stress levels

Maturity Model Aspiration Levels by 2025

Recruitment	4
Leadership	4
Learning Organisation	4
Blended Learning	3
Employee Recognition & Engagement	4
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	4
Wellbeing	4

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Commercial and Procurement Strategy

2021 – 2025

Working together towards a safer Kent and Medway



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service

together

Introduction

Our Commercial and Procurement Strategy is one of six strategies which set out our aims over the next four years. It outlines how we will help everyone that works for us to perform their roles by buying fit for purpose goods and services, and how we will demonstrate value for money when we do.

Our team focusses on five key areas, which are: operations; technology; fleet and professional services; facilities management and construction; and personal protective equipment and clothing. In 2018 we adopted an approach called category management. The principle, as defined by the Chartered Institute for Purchasing and Supply, is that category management is an approach which organises our resources to focus on specific areas of spend. The results can be greater than traditional transactional based purchasing methods. A structured category management approach helps us generate savings, but also improve supplier performance, reduce supply risks, and drive innovation and continuous improvement. We profile, benchmark, research and assess the market, and look for any risks and trends and new opportunities constantly. We are developing an expert level of knowledge in each category and we will maintain this approach.

We are committed to protecting human rights of all who come into contact with us, including customers, supply chain workers, local communities and everyone that works for us, through our zero tolerance of slavery, servitude, forced labour, bonded labour and human trafficking. We believe in making the opportunities we publish inclusive and accessible, and our evaluation of proposals is undertaken using objective and non-discriminatory criteria.

We lead the national procurement hub arrangements for procurement, and never was this more important than during the pandemic, when personal protective equipment was needed urgently across the sector. We contribute a large amount of time to supporting better procurement by all fire and rescue services nationally. In line with the expectations of the Home Office, we will continue to promote collaborative procurement as a way for all to reduce their costs, and so that we present a joined up approach to suppliers when we go to market.

Our priorities between 2021 and 2025 are:

To provide continuous support and guidance for all procurement and commercial matters, including access to market intelligence to support our business cases and purchasing decisions

We will provide professional expertise, support and guidance for all procurement and commercial matters, providing access to market intelligence to support all our purchasing decisions. Our Category Managers can identify the areas where additional research is needed, sometimes further into the supply chain than who we are immediately buying from.

To provide access to innovative products and services to support the evolving and diverse nature of services to our customers

We will provide access to information regarding product development and innovation to help develop our business requirements. Importantly this will mean that what we need can actually be provided by the market. This helps to reduce the research and development costs that suppliers would often need to invest in if they were bidding without understanding our needs more fully.

To continue to be transparent in ongoing and future procurement activity

We are committed to ensuring that we operate with integrity and in an open, fair and transparent way. We will continue to ensure that we publicise contracting opportunities to the open market, which includes our smaller suppliers in our local community, and we will encourage new entrants into the markets we work with.

To provide fit for purpose goods and services available to the front-line

We will work with our subject matter experts in teams to ensure that we buy in fit for purpose goods and services that provide the right level of protection and performance for our end users.

To consider inclusion and social value impacts and initiatives in all our procurement opportunities

We will promote measures for inclusion and social value initiatives in all our purchasing activities, in a way that is proportionate to the contract size and value, for the benefit of local communities, nationally or internationally.

To continue to support our local community through implementation of the Modern Slavery Policy.

We will evidence improvements year on year in terms of how the requirements of the policy are applied and publish a report annually on our website.

The strategy is designed to support the organisation's overall corporate plan, known as the Customer Safety Plan. Our corporate aims are:

- Responding effectively in times of customer need;
- Promoting behaviours which help you stay safe and well in your home;
- Encouraging you to adopt behaviours which keep you safe on the roads;
- Supporting businesses to help people to stay safe in their buildings and comply with legislation;
- Helping you and the broader community to stay safe from harm caused by accidents, natural events or people intending harm.

Strategic Assessment and Action Plan

Starting in summer 2020, we held a number of internal workshops and seminars, along with seeking feedback from our partners, including other fire and rescue services and police forces nationally, which has led to the creation of our 2021-2025 strategy.

Our Procurement and Commercial strategy is supported by an assessment which brings together all of the insight, evidence and data we've used to develop this blueprint.

This includes:

- The ten year forward assessment of risks and challenges presented in the Customer Safety Plan

- An analysis conducted by the Commercial and Procurement team of the current environment they are operating in, including current and possible future legislation in a post EU-Exit world
- A strengths and weaknesses analysis conducted by the Commercial and Procurement team
- Engagement across the organisation, capturing what everyone that works for us thinks the future holds
- National and international research on the impact of climate change and impacts on the natural environment
- Operational debriefs of incidents we have attended
- Feedback received from completed projects
- Green papers on EU transition arrangements
- Government guidance related to trade in a post EU exit environment
- Government guidance on modern slavery and social value
- Completed people impact assessments and equality of access case studies
- Case studies of good practice in dealing with suppliers published by government
- The outcome of research on exposure to, and mitigating the impacts of, contaminants in the workplace

We have developed an action plan which is a 'live' document and will be updated regularly by the Corporate Services Board and the Strategic Assets Board. The action plan outlines the activities we need to complete to implement the strategy.

Our priorities

Key objectives

<p>Priority one name</p> <p>To provide continuous support and guidance for all procurement and commercial matters, including access to market intelligence to support our business cases and purchasing decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve the quality of statements of needs published to the market • Include whole-life costs in decision making on all purchasing • Encourage pre-market engagement where this will get us a better product or service
<p>Priority two name</p> <p>To provide access to innovative products and services to support the evolving and diverse nature of services to our customers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the category management approach to our spend • Continue to work with partners and other agencies to purchase collaboratively • Continue to maintain an indepth and up to date knowledge of our markets
<p>Priority three name</p> <p>To continue to be transparent in ongoing and future procurement activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to publish all information required under the government transparency code for local government • Reduce the number of purchases made without a competiive process • Always maintain a published pipeline of future purchases
<p>Priority four name</p> <p>To provide fit for purpose goods and services available to the front-line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always engage with users in all procurements • Regularly seek feedback on the products and services we have purchased • Continue to effectively manage our contracts as a whole to ensure quality and performance is maintained

<p>Priority five name</p> <p>To consider inclusion and social value impacts and initiatives in all procurement opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the social value contribution our suppliers can make as well as value for money and publicise how we worked with suppliers to deliver such initiatives. • Continue to publish all opportunities to suppliers in an open and transparent way • Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion impacts are factored into all procurements and contract management processes. • Continue to diversify our supply chains, to ensure opportunities for our business are accessible by newer, smaller and innovative suppliers.
<p>Priority six name</p> <p>To continue to support our local community through implementation of the Modern Slavery Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a transparency in supply statement annually • Review the training provided to everyone that works for us on modern slavery to keep pace with new and emerging customer needs • Raise awareness locally and nationally about the need for effective due diligence and ethics in procurement

Priority one – To provide continuous support and guidance for all procurement and commercial matters, including access to market intelligence to support our business cases and purchasing decisions

Why do we need to do this?

Our requirement for goods and services is high. Spend with our suppliers is now reviewed by the Commercial and Procurement team by category rather than by contract. By viewing our suppliers this way, we have identified critical suppliers that may not have high spend, but have a competitive advantage, or would be a risk to our core functions if the business failed.

The team provides pre-market advice to budget managers, and support throughout the procurement and ongoing contract management process. From feedback, this support is well-received, but there is more we need to do to support our customers articulate what it is they need to secure from our suppliers.

Achievements 2017-21

- Implemented a category management approach to our spend
- Reviewed all the processes used by the team to better support our customers and make purchasing easier for all
- Provided extensive guidance to our internal customers on the procurement lifecycle, which includes a contract management toolkit, based on Cabinet Office best practice
- Identified our key suppliers to ensure there was continuity of supply, and explored new potential suppliers during the pandemic for all agencies involved in responding to the pandemic
- Improved how we communicate and engage with prospective and current suppliers
- Worked to reduce the number of purchases we make without a competitive process

Where next?

- Continue to develop our ability to articulate our business need in advance of designing a specification to ensure the scope of the work is established*
- Continue to ensure all potential hidden costs are identified and factored into the pricing model to give full transparency of costs throughout the life of the contract
- Continue to support contract managers to effectively manage contracts to minimise change control and scope creep
- Continue to improve the articulation of our requirements, coupled with evaluation criteria that considers the total cost of ownership of products and cost of receiving services*
- Introduce long-term contracts with inbuilt resilience and risk sharing, wherever appropriate, as ways of achieving efficiency and effectiveness*
- Ensure all new contracts include provisions requiring the contractor to endeavour to identify and implement cost saving measures*
- Support contract managers of existing contracts to review the performance of suppliers and any changes they make to prices
- Seek feedback from service users, communities and providers in order to review the effectiveness of the commissioning process in meeting local needs and adjust them accordingly*
- Reduce the total spend (>£10k) that occurs without the support of the Commercial and Procurement team to zero by 2025
- Facilitate the involvement of the broadest range of suppliers, including considering sub-contracting and consortia building, where appropriate
- Continue to ensure our assessment of needs is fully understood, through engagement with all relevant end-users as part of the design and delivery of requirements*
- Continue to include monitoring requirements within the contract terms and conditions to ensure information required to validate benefits is accessible from the supplier
- Continue to ensure procurement activity is formally commissioned, with sign-off by the budget manager
- Continue to encourage and facilitate pre-market engagement in advance of 'go-live' of new contracting opportunities*
- Conduct annual engagement with relevant sectors for each category to give clarity of the direction of our business and to enable supplier feedback*
- Continue to develop category plans which support the delivery of this strategy by documenting a pipeline of future activity

- Continue to support appropriate commercial qualifications for all in the procurement team
- Support five days of specialised professional development per year for each member of the team as

required by Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply

All those actions above marked with an asterisk (*) also support all the subsequent priorities set out below.

What does success look like?

- Professional expertise will be provided to budget managers and relevant internal stakeholders
- Support and guidance for all procurement and commercial matters is available through a planned and managed pipeline of activity
- Market intelligence is used consistently to support the development of business cases and aid purchasing decisions.
- Suppliers see the fire sector as a more attractive buyer of their products and services
- We will have developed a deeper understanding of supply chains
- Knowledge and application of procurement processes across the organisation will improve

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Ensure that all spend >£10k is supported by the Commercial and Procurement Team	100% third party spend >£10k supported by Commercial and Procurement by 2025.
Improved whole life cost considerations factored into requirements	100% of new procurements to evidence whole life cost considerations.
Manage contracts more effectively	In-contract savings to contribute towards the overall 2% cashable and operational savings across all categories to reinvest any cash releasing savings in other areas of business need
Publication of up to date contracts register.	100% compliance against the government's transparency agenda in relation to commercial and procurement issues
Satisfied customers	Positive and constructive feedback from users and budget managers following interaction with the commercial and procurement team. Any challenge is used to improve process

Priority two – To provide access to innovative products and services to support the evolving and diverse nature of services to our customers

Why do we need to do this?

Our business is changing as our range of customers change. We are developing better insight into what encourages people to change their behaviour and adopt safer ways of living. This means we need different products and services to that we have had in the past.

A structured category management approach will not only help us generate savings, but also improve supplier performance, mitigate any supply risks, and drive innovation and continuous improvement. By engaging early with the market before publishing specifications there is also less chance that the market will fail to meet our needs, saving both time and money.

Achievements 2017-21

- Implemented a category management approach to spend
- Contributed savings to the sector as calculated using the agreed Cabinet Office model from workwear and personal protective equipment contract
- Successfully provided new products to front line members of the team, such as tablet devices to input data direct, to innovative smoke alarms, to new firefighting equipment.
- Engaged with other fire and rescue services and suppliers to share approaches to new fire stations and the design of specialist facilities
- Reacted to the Grenfell and Kerslake inquiries and deployed new products to better serve customers, like smoke hoods, smoke curtains and “floor below” hose extensions
- Contributed to the development of improved standards of safety for clothing and protective equipment

Where next?

In addition to the actions marked under priority one with an asterisk (*) the following will also be delivered

- Continue to consider the wider purchasing power of other public sector organisations for each procurement project.
- Continue to aggregate volumes and requirements of contracts that are duplicated
- Continue to consult all potential providers, sharing our pipeline of work with them well in advance of commissioning new services, and work with them to assist us to innovate and encourage market growth
- Facilitate the involvement of the broadest range of suppliers, including considering sub-contracting and consortia building, where appropriate
- Introduce criteria that capitalises on the provider base and their networks, particularly those working with and focused on supporting hard-to-reach groups
- Continue to encourage pre-market engagement by us in advance of issuing new contracting opportunities
- Support the national fire commercial strategy by promoting collaboration in procurement

What does success look like?

- We will provide direct access to information regarding product development and innovation which will assist in developing our statement of business requirements
- We will deepen our understanding of the marketplace and align our requests to it, which makes it much more likely that the desired outcome will be achieved
- We will help reduce the research and development costs that suppliers would often need to invest if we went to market without engaging first
- More fire and rescue services will engage in collaborative procurement projects

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Satisfied customers	Feedback from users and budget managers following interaction with commercial and procurement team is broadly positive. Any challenge is used to improve process
Manage contracts more effectively	In-contract savings to contribute towards the overall 2% cashable and operational savings across all categories to reinvest any cash releasing savings in other areas of business need

Priority three – To continue to be transparent in ongoing and future procurement activity

Why do we need to do this?

To successfully get the products and services we need, we need there to be a vibrant market providing innovative solutions. We will work with suppliers and their representative bodies as a collective of fire and rescue services nationally to present how we are changing the role of fire and rescue services to meet changing customer needs. We lead the way in terms of supporting the objectives of the National Fire Commercial Transformation Programme (more commonly known now as the National Procurement Hub), which was formed in response to the Police and Fire Minister and Home Secretary's reform announcements which challenged the Sector to do more to improve its commercial strategy.

We are committed to ensuring that we operate with integrity and in an open, fair and transparent way, and with a public sector ethos. We will continue to ensure that we publicise contracting opportunities to the open market, which includes our suppliers in our local community. The Authority does not run any enterprise or provide any service for the purpose of profit making. We are dedicated wholly to public services and we see no role for commerciality except in very limited circumstances as set out in our charging policy. We do not accept commercial sponsorship from any other organisation in any form for any products or services it delivers.

Achievements 2017-21

- We've set up and continue to lead the National Procurement Hub
- We have pro-actively supported and championed the development of a National Fire and Rescue Commercial Strategy
- The Commercial and Procurement Team has delivered procurement savings nationally of over £3.3m since April 2017, tracked and recorded against the Cabinet Office savings methodology
- The national workwear framework has delivered savings of between 20-40% against previous annual expenditure for similar products
- The national framework for structural personal protective equipment has increased quality and protection for over 33,000 firefighters coupled with £790k cashable savings for the sector

- We have engaged with national and regional groups, and suppliers to build confidence in collaborative buying

Where next?

In addition to the actions marked under priority one with an asterisk (*) the following will also be delivered

- Continue to consider the wider purchasing power of other public sector organisations for each procurement project and to lead the National Procurement Hub.
- Continue to facilitate the involvement of the broadest range of suppliers, including considering sub-contracting and consortia building, where appropriate.
- Continue to consult all potential providers, sharing our pipeline of work with them well in advance of commissioning new services, and work with them to assist us to innovate and encourage market growth
- Introduce criteria that capitalises on the provider base and their networks, particularly those working with and focused on supporting hard-to-reach groups
- Always include monitoring requirements within the contract terms and conditions to ensure information required to validate benefits is accessible from the supplier
- Ensure all relevant procurement activity is formally commissioned, and signed off by the budget manager
- Continue to ensure all opportunities are advertised on 'Find a Tender' and Contracts Finder
- Support provision of refreshed counter-fraud and corruption training to managers and key staff involved in procurement and financial issues

What does success look like?

- We will have a pipeline of goods and services which we need to buy which is agreed by budget managers and relevant stakeholders
- Small and medium sized enterprises in Kent and Medway provide a higher percentage of our needs
- We meet and exceed the requirements of the government's transparency agenda for local authorities

- We will ensure a fair and level playing field; so that all suppliers are aware of any opportunities, how the procurement rules apply, and ensure that there are no barriers to their participation

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Ensure that all contracting opportunities are inclusive and offer equal opportunity and right to access.	100% of relevant procurement opportunities >£10k advertised in Find a Tender and Contracts Finder
Ensure procurement activity is pre-planned	Publish a pipeline of future procurement activity
Efficiencies through aggregated contracts and collaboration	Minimum of 5% reduction in number of contracts across all categories In-contract savings to contribute towards the overall 2% cashable and operational savings across all categories to reinvest cash releasing savings in other areas of business need
Maintain our ethical stance on the use of public money	Roll out training to 65 key managers in counter-fraud and corruption

Priority four – To provide fit for purpose goods and services to the front-line

Why do we need to do this?

We provide critical emergency services to customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. At all times, everyone that works for us needs to have the right equipment to do their jobs effectively, and keep customers and themselves safe. We purchase fit for purpose goods/services that offer the right level of protection to our staff and customers. Inclusion is integrated into our definition of fit for purpose and all products and services will be subject to effective people impact assessments.

We need to work with our subject matter experts in teams to ensure that we buy in fit for purpose goods and services that we make available to our internal customers. These then help make our external customers safer when they need our services.

Achievements 2017-21

- We have delivered 3.5m items of personal protective consumables across the entire fire sector in response to the pandemic
- We have delivered structural personal protective equipment with over 33,000 firefighters wearing the standard garments across the United Kingdom
- We have delivered a contract delivering standardised workwear to 11,500 wearers across the United Kingdom
- We have delivered 11 hybrid pool cars, contributing to the aims set out in our Environmental Improvement and Assets Strategy
- We have increased the engagement of users in all our procurement work and taken their feedback into account, implementing changes to our processes and services where feasible to do so.
- We have begun to improve the technology that underpins all our services so it is more resilient, using cloud technology wherever possible
- People impact assessments have been completed for all major procurement activities, ensuring that we promote equality, inclusion and diversity

Where next?

In addition to the actions marked under priority one with an asterisk (*) the following will also be delivered

- Consider the wider purchasing power of other public sector organisations for each procurement project.
- Continue to aggregate volumes and requirements of contracts that are duplicated
- Reduce spend (>£10k) that occurs without the support of the Commercial and Procurement team to zero by 2025
- Continue to facilitate the involvement of the broadest range of suppliers, including considering sub-contracting and consortia building, where appropriate.
- Include monitoring requirements within the contract terms and conditions to ensure information required to validate benefits and commitment to equality, inclusion and diversity is accessible from the supplier.

What does success look like?

- End users will receive high quality goods and services that keep them safe and aide and improve the service we offer
- The number of reportable injuries that happen will reduce even further
- Through our awareness of the market, we will be aware of new technologies to assist with reduction of contaminants in our garments to continue to ensure the safety of our wearers and artificial intelligence and the internet of things and how they help could us in the future keep customers safer
- The needs of our external customers will continue to be taken into account in our purchasing
- All our products and services meet our high expectations of inclusion for all

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Ensure that all contracting opportunities are inclusive and offer equal opportunity and right to access.	100% of relevant procurement opportunities >£10k advertised in Find a Tender and Contracts Finder
Ensure users are satisfied with the outcomes procurements	End user development of requirements, participation in procurement evaluation processes (which includes product practical trials), and outcomes of debriefs from incidents End user satisfaction surveys and outcomes of debriefs from incidents

Priority five – To consider inclusion and social value impacts and initiatives in all our procurement opportunities

Why do we need to do this?

In September 2020 the government announced a range of new measures to promote new jobs and skills, encourage economic growth and prosperity, tackle climate change and level up the UK. They issued a social value in procurement model to be used by government departments and local authorities to assess a supplier's social impact. This approach is intended to mean more opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises and social enterprises to win contracts by demonstrating the full extent of the value they would generate. Value for money will still be paramount, but a bidder's social value score will be incorporated into assessment of contracts.

We support this concept and will take steps to incorporate social value measures into all our purchasing and across all the five categories considered in this strategy.

Achievements 2017-21

- Delivered a new Procurement Policy including a commitment to social value and inclusion
- We now include consideration of the commitment made to social value issues by tenderers when we evaluate them
- Supported small and medium sized enterprises in Kent and Medway to successfully bid for goods and services we require
- Developed a policy to provide references for suppliers, especially smaller suppliers entering the market
- We have used our commitment to apprenticeships and skills development to support three apprentices through their qualifications with one of our major suppliers
- We worked with our first aid supplier to support Restart a Heart campaigns across Kent and Medway

Where next?

In addition to the actions marked under priority one with an asterisk (*) the following will also be delivered

- Consider the wider purchasing power of other public sector organisations for each procurement project.
- Continue to consult potential providers, including those from the third sector and local experts, well in advance of commissioning new services, and work with them to assist us to innovate
- Facilitate the involvement of the broadest range of suppliers, including considering sub-contracting and consortia building, where appropriate.
- Introduce criteria that invests in the capacity of the provider base, particularly those working with and focused on supporting hard-to-reach groups
- Deliver a process to include social value in all purchasing
- All opportunities to be advertised on 'Find a Tender' and Contracts Finder as per Legislation.
- Include tangible and realistic measures for social value initiatives within our procurement opportunities that are proportionate to the contract size and value, for the benefit of local communities.
- Manage the contract, measuring the social value that suppliers commit to delivering.
- Publicise previous social value work with our suppliers on our website to provide monetary and non-monetary examples to prospective suppliers of what could be achieved

What does success look like?

We will be recognised as an organisation at the forefront of promoting social value in procurement

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Social value considerations in all procurement opportunities	100% procurements/contracts consider social value outcomes.
As a minimum, deliver social value initiatives within 5 important themes	Diverse supply chains Skills and employment Environmental and sustainability Inclusion, staff, mental health and wellbeing Safe and secure supply chains

Priority six – To continue to support our local community through implementation of the Modern Slavery Act

Why do we need to do this?

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain. To tackle these crimes, the Modern Slavery Act 2015 was introduced.

We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure modern slavery is not taking place anywhere in our own business, in any of our supply chains and to be sufficiently trained to identify risks when performing our front line services. This overarching commitment is supported at the highest level and interdepartmental collaboration is used to ensure a harmonised and effective approach. We will promote this approach to all our suppliers.

We will evidence improvements year on year in terms of how the requirements of the policy are applied.

Achievements 2017-21

- We participated in the Home Office consultation for the change in Modern Slavery regulations to include responsibility for public sector organisations
- We published a modern slavery policy in February 2021
- We have provided practical tips to everyone that works for us on the signs indicating potential modern slavery in the workplace or homes
- We have changed our approaches to safeguarding children and adults to include modern slavery issues
- We have worked with critical suppliers to ensure they complete the modern slavery assessment tool to help us monitor their progress

Where next?

In addition to the actions marked under priority one with an asterisk (*) the following will also be delivered

- Publish annually a transparency in supply chains statement on our website
- Continue to consult potential provides, including those from the third sector and local experts, well in advance of commissioning new services, and work with them to assist us to innovate
- Introduce criteria that invests in the capacity of the provider base, particularly those working with and focused on supporting hard-to-reach groups
- Provide training to everyone that works for us on Modern Slavery and the signs to look for
- Raise awareness locally and nationally about the need for effective due diligence and ethics in procurement

What does success look like?

Everyone that works for us will recognise the signs and signals of potential modern slavery and how to report any concerns, be at work or in their private life.

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Support our local community through implementation of Modern Slavery policy	100% of suppliers that meet the published criteria signed up to Modern Slavery reporting tool
Publication of Transparency in Supply Chains Statement	Annual statements to be published by Quarter 2 each year.

Environment and Assets Strategy

2021 – 2025

Working together towards a safer Kent and Medway



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service

together

Introduction

Our Environment and Assets strategy is one of six which set out our aims over the next four years. It outlines how we will help everyone that works here to perform their roles by providing the right equipment, in the right places and buildings, across Kent and Medway. It also help us to meet our role in responding to national emergencies.

Over the last ten years we have invested in our estate and our assets, and replaced fire engines with more efficient ones. We have and provided innovative new equipment to make firefighting safer. We have made our fire stations better to work in and more inclusive to meet the needs of our diverse workforce. But there is more to do. We have a range of vehicles like fire engines, blue light response cars, pool vehicles and vans and firefighting equipment. We spend £1.88m on fleet maintenance and fuel, and the operational equipment replacement, maintenance and servicing budget is £1.3m per year. Over the next four years we anticipate spending £16m on replacing vehicles across the fleet. We are used to challenging and achieving value for money on everything we buy. And we look for innovation and the best deals available to meet our specified needs.

We also want good driving behaviour from everyone that drives the vehicles we own. We use data from telemetry in vehicles, and CCTV footage, to assist with coaching driver behaviour, to investigate accidents and defend insurance claims against us.

Our estate is made up of fire stations, some houses, training venues and office buildings. Most are over 40 years old, with two sites having historical interest which are sited in conservation areas, which limits potential change to these buildings. Four new fire stations were built between 2014 and 2017.

The current estate consists of

- 56 fire stations, including stand-alone on-call fire stations in more rural areas;
- Technical rescue centre;
- Distribution centre;
- Training venues including the Authority's main training centre;
- 27 houses, which includes seven that are currently held for sale;
- The Godlands site in Maidstone;
- Vacant sites at Westwood Cross in Thanet and in Watling Street, Chatham, both earmarked for disposal

In the next four years we want to use our estate more efficiently by becoming more energy efficient and reducing our running costs. We will continue to provide space for partners and other agencies to work, and explore opportunities to share and collaborate where we can, as well as provide fit for purpose emergency response bases for the Service.

Strategic priorities

Our priorities between 2021 and 2025 are:

Improve the working experience on our fire stations

Our buildings need to be in the right place and fit for purpose. They need to be maintained according to current guidance and laws. They should provide a good working environment for a modern and inclusive fire and rescue service, where everyone that works for us can be creative and productive for all teams.

Respond to the post COVID world by reconfiguring the office and training estate

We want to use the experience we have gained by working remotely and effectively during the pandemic, to make this the norm, providing everyone, wherever possible, with the opportunity to balance office life and home life. We want to provide the right training environment to help everyone fulfil their potential.

Use technology and data to better manage, and make more efficient use of, our fleet

Our current fleet management system is due for replacement as it is based on very old technology, so we want to update this. This will help us continue to use all our vehicles efficiently and provide repairs and spares quickly, when they are needed. We will aim to have a fleet of vehicles which contributes to protecting the environment.

Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030

Taking our environmental responsibilities seriously has been core to our business for at least the last decade. The previous strategy set out how we invested in solar capture at some sites but also changed our behaviour in using less paper and printing

less too. But the climate issues we face globally means we all need to do more. Our carbon action plan sets out our commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

Improve how we manage our contracts and suppliers

We have a large number of contracts in place for all our assets. We have a long-standing arrangement with Kent County Council for the scheduled servicing and major defect repairs for our fire appliances and specialist heavy fleet but our light fleet servicing is more ad hoc. We want to change and improve this. We have a large programme of work we want to do at fire stations to improve them so we will ensure that we spend our money wisely in doing these improvements.

The strategy is designed to support the organisation's overall corporate plan, known as the Customer Safety Plan. Our corporate aims are:

- Responding effectively in times of customer need;
- Promoting behaviours which help you stay safe and well in your home;
- Encouraging you to adopt behaviours which keep you safe on the roads;
- Supporting businesses to help people to stay safe in their buildings and comply with legislation;
- Helping you and the broader community to stay safe from harm caused by accidents, natural events or people intending harm.

Strategic Assessment and Action Plan

Starting in summer 2020, we held a number of internal workshops and seminars, along with seeking feedback from our partners, which has led to the creation of our 2021-2025 strategy.

Our Environment and Asset strategy is accompanied by an assessment which brings together all of the insight, evidence and data we've used to develop this blueprint.

This includes:

- National and international research on the impact of climate change
- Legislative and statutory compliance requirements
- The ten year forward assessment of risks and challenges presented in the Customer and Corporate Plan
- Data collected from an estate wide stock condition survey
- An analysis conducted by the property and fleet teams of what the future may look like
- A strengths and weaknesses analysis conducted by the property and fleet teams
- Engagement across the organisation, capturing what everyone that works for us thinks the future holds
- Operational debriefs of incidents we have attended
- Feedback received by each team from completed projects

We have developed an action plan which is a 'live' document and will be updated regularly by the Estates Board, Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Programme Board and the Assets Board. The action plan outlines the activities we need to complete to implement this strategy.

Our priorities

Key objectives

<p>Priority one name</p> <p>Improve the working experience on our fire stations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a programme of refurbishment and improvement to all our fire stations • Continue to minimise any contamination at fire stations by particulates when firefighters return from incidents • Embed inclusion and dignity at work in all property works
<p>Priority two name</p> <p>Respond to the post COVID world by reconfiguring the office and training estate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace the live fire training facility at Ashford • Consider our options for the existing Maidstone site • Reconfigure the Godlands building and Rochester fire station
<p>Priority three name</p> <p>Use technology and data to better manage, and make more efficient use of, our fleet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with suppliers to encourage innovation in the design of new more environmentally friendly fire and carbon efficient engines • Consider a “make ready” site for fire engines • Utilise data to better inform decisions about the way we use our fleet
<p>Priority four name</p> <p>Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 • Change the behaviour of everyone that works for us to be more aware of their impact on their environment • Improve the energy efficiency of our buildings
<p>Priority five name</p> <p>Improve how we manage our contracts and suppliers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate our contracts into fewer, bigger contracts for major works and repairs • Invest in a property management system • Deliver a better way of managing servicing for our smaller vehicles

Priority one – Improve the working experience on our fire stations

Why do we need to do this?

Fire stations contain dangerous equipment and vehicles can move quickly off the site when responding to 999 calls. They also contain assets which are important in the event of a major national incident, like flooding or a terrorist attack.

We need to make sure our buildings are fit for purpose. Many were built in the 1960s and 70s, and in places are showing their age. Whilst we cannot replace them all, we do want to spend some money improving them. This will help make the experience of going to work as good as it can be. It will provide a more welcoming environment if a member of the public needs a safe haven, have good fitness facilities for everyone that works for us and the buildings will be safe and secure. We will also encourage all teams to use fire stations for project and team meetings.

Achievements 2017-21

- Opened Ramsgate fire station
- Reviewed our approach to minimising contaminants brought into fire stations on personal protective equipment after attending incidents, and started work at stations to separate 'clean and dirty' areas
- Following an internal audit improved how we manage safety records related to property
- Sold two houses we no longer needed, and have another seven due for disposal.
- Prepared the Westwood Cross site, and surplus land at our Medway site, for sale
- Dealt with more than 2,000 immediate and urgent repairs to our properties since April 2019, in an average of 5 working days per case.

Where next?

- Continue to minimise any contamination at fire stations by particulates when firefighters return from incidents by improving storage for personal protective equipment and servicing areas for breathing apparatus.
- Following the review of emergency response outlined in the operational response and resilience strategy, identify any alternative locations for fire stations we may need.
- Dispose of other sites we may no longer need, following the review of emergency response provision, including any housing outside of Tonbridge or Sevenoaks.
- Review options for funding our future accommodation needs, including leasing sites.
- Define clear patterns of investment and refurbishment for all properties covering the fabric of the building, heating and decoration, along with cyclical works like gas and electrical safety tests¹.
- Issue a suite of property policies setting out what we will provide to everyone that works for us at fire stations and other buildings.
- Embed inclusion and dignity at work in all property works through inclusive design processes and thorough stakeholder consultation.
- Continue to share our premises with emergency services, and local authorities.
- Improve the security of our buildings that are known to have suffered from repetitive incidences of opportunist theft.
- Replace commercial kitchens on stations with hobs and microwave provision in line with our policies.
- Provide a better environment for gyms and physical fitness training across the estate to support colleagues in meeting the fitness requirements of their job role and to promote health and wellbeing throughout the organisation.
- Enhance our buildings as opportunities arise to improve the working environment across the estate.
- Continue to improve the training facilities at stations through the adaptation of existing facilities.

¹ windows c25 years, boilers c15-25 years dependent on type, general decoration, and ablutions c7-10 years, kitchens c15 years, roofs c20-25 years (flat roofs) or when beyond economical repair (pitched, clad roofs)

What does success look like?

- Our buildings will better meet the needs of everyone that works for us
- Our buildings will always be in the right place and fit for purpose, now and in the future. They will be maintained in accordance with our own policies and to current guidance and laws
- Our estate is utilised more by partners. We benefit from sharing our professional experiences with them from incidents we've attended
- Our internal customers are clear on the standards they should expect from buildings they work in
- Consultation with our internal customer will take place where changes are proposed
- Projects will be delivered with the engagement of the user of the equipment or the building user
- We will have a reputation as an organisation which innovates and uses new technology to provide services to customers, while keeping everyone that works for us safe.
- Our buildings in the future will be branded and will have a light, airy and modern feeling, wherever possible to do so. We want to maintain an inclusive estate, where people can bring themselves to work.
- Fire stations will be used for team meetings by people that wouldn't usually be based there, encouraging people to break down any remaining barriers between firefighters and corporate teams.
- On-call fire stations will receive a level of investment which reflects their importance to us in delivering services to the public

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our key objectives.

Description	Indicator
Engagement levels	% increase in the number of people/groups engaged Survey results from internal users of the service Feedback from users of our buildings
Service level standards	Establishment of service levels Annual targets agreed using the baseline figures for response to urgent repairs reported to Fleet and Property teams Complete a minimum of 90% of the capital programme of works, and aim for 100%
Maintain professional competence	Maintenance of continuous professional development and membership of professional bodies by people that work in fleet and property
Customer behaviour	The increased use of helpdesk for all queries related to property and fleet issues, with fewer enquiries going outside this process Security and safety improves – measured by fewer opportunistic crimes reported and through acknowledgement with internal audit reports.
Process improvement	Process maps created and published. Customer journeys in making requests to teams fully documented and understood
Partner sharing	More of our buildings are shared by other public agencies.
Compliance	We will continue to have in place current electrical and gas safety certificates, and asbestos and legionnaires management plans at 100% of our buildings

Priority two – Respond to the post COVID world by reconfiguring the office and training estate

Why do we need to do this?

Members of corporate teams, and uniformed officers that don't work at fire stations have worked flexibly from home since the start of the pandemic. We want to encourage everyone that can, to balance working from home and from different office spaces, in a way which best meets our business needs and their personal preferences.

The site at Maidstone which contains the fire station, technical rescue team, our distribution centre and training centre is surrounded by housing. The buildings were primarily built in the 1970s. Maidstone fire station uses space poorly considering how we now work. It is also one of our more expensive buildings to run as it wastes heat.

Firefighters need realistic training facilities. Our training facilities which simulate building fires at Maidstone are harder and more expensive to maintain due to their age. Training Centre does not provide the inclusive, immersive training experience we want. We are investing in brand new live fire training facilities at Ashford fire station.

Achievements 2017-21

- Commissioned a partner to design a replacement live fire training facility at Ashford
- Successfully moved to working from home for those that can before the first national lockdown
- Maintained all our statutory duties and public services during the pandemic
- Completed a comprehensive survey of the condition of all the buildings we own
- Invested across the estate, including at on-call fire stations
- Conducted working from home risk assessments and the provision of equipment to enable people to work from home effectively and safely

Where next?

- Deliver the Ashford live fire training project to provide realistic, immersive training to new and existing firefighters.
- Convert Rochester fire station to accommodate “clean training”, including driving, with teaching rooms and emergency life support training centre.

- Relocate the technical rescue team from Maidstone to another site that enhances their response and training capability
- Consider our options for Maidstone fire station and our distribution centre.
- Relocate our 999 Control centre alongside the Police
- Change the look and feel of the estate to encourage team interaction and collaboration, starting at the Godlands site
- Begin the process of disposing of the existing Maidstone site, subject to planning consents
- Issue a suite of property policies setting out what we will provide to everyone that works for us at fire stations and other buildings
- Embed inclusion and dignity at work in all property works
- Improve the security of our buildings that are known to have suffered from repetitive incidences of opportunist theft.
- Encourage creativity and collaboration to solve problems by working flexibly

What does success look like?

- Training for firefighters will be more realistic and the facilities will be more reliable, with less down time
- Using state of the art technology, simulate the conditions expected in a house fire, whilst only releasing water vapour into the atmosphere in the new Ashford facility. This will improve the environment for neighbouring businesses and residents to the site, both at Ashford and Maidstone
- Classroom based training will be provided in a fit for purpose and inclusive environment
- Our buildings will better meet the needs of everyone that works for us
- Our internal customers are clear on the standards they should expect from buildings they work in
- Key decisions on property and fleet issues will be made with the consultation of stakeholders
- Projects will be delivered with the engagement of the user of the equipment or the building user
- We will have a reputation as an organisation which innovates and uses new technology to provide services to customers, while keeping everyone that works for us safe.

- Our buildings in the future will be branded and will have a light, airy and modern feeling, wherever possible to do so. We want to maintain an inclusive estate, where people can bring themselves to work.

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Better live fire training facilities	Ashford live fire training facility to open April 2023.
Engagement levels	% increase in the number of people/groups engaged Survey results from internal users of the service Feedback from users of our buildings
Service level standards	Establishment of service levels Annual targets agreed using the baseline figures for response to urgent repairs reported to Fleet and Property teams
Maintain professional competence	Maintenance of continuous professional development and membership of professional bodies by people that work in fleet and property
Customer behaviour	The increased use of helpdesk for all queries related to property and fleet issues, with fewer enquiries going outside this process Security and safety improves – measured by fewer opportunistic crimes reported and audits by internal audit.
Process improvement	Process maps created and published. Customer journeys in making requests to teams fully documented and understood 90% completion of the capital works programme and aim for 100% each year

Priority three – Improve how we manage our fleet

Why do we need to do this?

The equipment we now carry is becoming increasingly technical in nature, requiring specific maintenance and tracking, as well as being of high value.

When a vehicle develops a fault and we need to swap it with another, the firefighters at the station have to spend time swapping all of the equipment from one vehicle to another. This is inefficient.

Now that telemetry is installed across our fleet of vehicles, we can begin to utilise the data it provides to help coach improvements in driver skills and behaviours, as well as guide how many vehicles we need in the first place. The average age of our light fleet has already reduced from 10 years to about 6 years, saving on costs as cars age

Each driver uses a swipe card system to register that they are driving a vehicle. This data can then be compiled over time, to identify a pattern of driver behaviour. We want to use this data to make our driver training courses more effective.

Achievements 2017-21

- We have adopted the national standard for fire and rescue services related to driver training
- Between 2019 and 2021 we saved a total of £687,000 off the recommended retail price for all vehicles we have purchased
- Replaced 15 fire engines with new, more efficient ones
- We have installed CCTV on our red fleet and achieved a £60,000 annual saving on our insurance premium.
- We now have vehicle telemetry and driver id systems installed across our fleet.
- We are buying fewer pool cars and response cars.

Where next?

- Explore the concept used by the ambulance service of a make ready centre for fire engines used predominately by on-call firefighters.
- Deliver a new fleet management system that is also able to manage the other items of operational equipment our vehicles carry so that regular safety checks can be performed
- Refresh our access control and swipe to drive systems with current technology
- Continue to review business practices in Fleet to ensure that we are current and align with statutory requirements and industry best practice
- Provide vehicles that already have all the equipment needed on them when they need to be swapped out for repairs or servicing
- Make better decisions about how many vehicles we need to replace when they are due for renewal using telemetry data
- Tailor driving courses to the internal customer's needs based on telemetry information from recent drives, with the help of a driver trainer
- Reduce our station pool car fleet and review the requirement for the remainder of our total fleet of vehicles.
- Replace the legacy Hydrant system, providing more efficient hydrant management information exploring the ability to migrate this functionality into the Dynamics application.

What does success look like?

- Track equipment usage, defects, and repairs more effectively and maintain statutory compliance on life-critical equipment such as ladders
- Improve where necessary driver behaviour with fewer driving complaints received by the Service
- Achieve a reduction in motor insurance claims.
- Deliver personalised training which meets the needs of our internal customers

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Improve driver behaviour	Fewer complaints received by the service from the baseline on 2020/21 performance. Reduction in the number of motor insurance claims made against the Authority.
Improve Fleet processes	Customer journeys documented via telemetry in 100% of cases Reduction in the time lost to vehicle and equipment defects
Use the fleet more efficiently	Reduce the number of pool cars from the 2021 baseline Reduce business miles as part of the climate action plan Reduce the station based pool car fleet by 15%

Priority four – Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030

Why do we need to do this?

We have also continued to make changes focused on reducing our impact on the environment. In 2020 we replaced over 55 light fleet vehicles, some of which were 15 years old; this represents approximately a quarter of our light vehicle fleet including eleven hybrid vehicles within our light fleet. Additionally, we use telemetry data to improve our utilisation of vehicles. This will very soon help us to reduce the number of replacement vehicles that we buy, as well as monitoring how well we are driving overall.

We have declared our own climate emergency, as have most local authorities in Kent and Medway. This means we are committed to reducing our impact on the environment through our day to day work, and operational incidents. We have set out our plan for achieving this in our climate action plan, attached at **Annex 1**. The actions we need to take range from behaviour, to physical changes to buildings, how we buy goods and services and investing in technology.

Achievements 2017-21

- We have replaced 81 of our oldest cars and vans
- We have invested in 11 hybrid vehicles, reducing our carbon footprint
- We have set up an internal engagement group to share ideas on environmental improvements
- We have engaged the services of a consultant to assist with creating a decarbonisation strategy and started work on a climate action plan.
- We have commissioned a biodiversity study of our land
- We have installed solar panels on 37 buildings.
- We have invested in systems which tell us where our vehicles travel and how they are being driven
- Reduced the size of our fleet and introducing more efficient vehicles has helped us to achieve an overall reduction in diesel usage of 7.6% over this period – exceeding our previous target of a 5% reduction

Where next?

- Deliver the actions set out in the climate action plan
- Invest in intelligent building management systems provide real time data on energy usage, providing heat when it is needed.
- Invest in further solar and heat capture schemes to provide some of our energy needs
- Plant native, insect encouraging species across our estate to create biodiverse microsystems that encourage flora and fauna to thrive
- Install more nesting boxes in suitable locations to attract and support local wildlife, including birds and bats.
- Repair or replace flat roofs where it is needed to improve the thermal performance of our buildings.
- Consider the implications of allowing community charging points at some locations, in partnership with Kent County Council
- Extend working from home during the COVID 19 pandemic to become part of the new normal way of working
- Continue to reduce business mileage through online conferencing
- Use the internal environmental engagement group to generate new ideas for environmental improvements we could make

What does success look like?

- We will achieve carbon neutrality by 2030
- More native species will be seen on our land
- That we have provided the opportunity for colleagues to work flexibly and remotely, to suit the business need and helping them achieve their own work life balance.
- Business mileage will reduce
- Our energy expenditure will reduce.

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Deliver our carbon action plan	Reduce carbon footprint by at least 40% across the entire estate within 5 years. Reduce estate wide energy costs by 15% within 5 years. Reduction in energy expenditure
Increase biodiversity	Have a biodiversity plan which is actioned and monitored
Increase internal engagement	Hold at least two meetings a year of the Environment Engagement Group

Priority five – Improve how we manage our contracts and suppliers

Why do we need to do this?

We conduct procurement activity in accordance with legal obligations, in a way that aligns to The Public Contract Regulations 2015, public sector policy and best practice for the purpose of delivering value for money.

We believe the arrangement we have with Kent County Council for servicing our larger vehicles demonstrates value for money. The light vehicle fleet is currently managed on a vehicle by vehicle basis with repairers that are geographically based Kent and Medway. This method generates a large number of individual transactions and is not as efficient as it could be.

Where possible we work collaboratively with other fire and rescue services and emergency services to develop innovative specifications that meet the changing role of the fire and rescue service. This also allows us to aggregate demand and achieve further value for money through economies of scale. The Procurement team work closely with Fleet and Equipment, Property Services, and colleagues from across the sector to fully understand the markets in which we are operating.

Achievements 2017-21

- Bought fifteen new, smaller fire engines primarily for on-call fire stations
- Bought a telehandler which is a vehicle for moving loads to heights in any terrain
- introduced two new all-terrain vehicles, extending the range of incidents we can attend and deal with
- Work to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of our vehicle maintenance programme has also been implemented, helping to reduce administrative work, labour costs and vehicle down time
- Between 2019 and 2021 we saved a total of £687,000 on the recommended retail price for all vehicles we have purchased
- Using available purchasing frameworks for equipment we have delivered savings of between 30%-45% off of the manufacturer's retail price.

Where next?

- We will review how we contract repair, servicing, replacement and improvement work with our suppliers to get the best value for money, and rapid speed of response to any station based issues.
- Introduce a servicing regime for the light-fleet vehicles as we introduce the new ones that matches the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Buy collaboratively wherever possible to achieve better value for money.
- Review all our telecoms masts where we receive a rental income in light of new legislation to ensure that

sharing our land and facilities with telecoms operators does not cause detriment to our core service.

- Conduct regular market engagement to ensure awareness of new and evolving technologies and ensure suppliers understand what we need.
- Work closely with our critical suppliers to manage potential risks, identify cost saving opportunities and continuously improve performance throughout the life of the contract.

What does success look like?

- We will ensure that we raise purchase orders before receiving goods and services 95% of the time before we receive invoices for them
- Regular market engagement with suppliers to drive innovation

- **How will we measure performance against our objectives?**

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Reduce costs	Reduce expenditure against reactive premises works by 30% by December 2024
Purchase collaboratively	Increase the % of spend incurred collaboratively Any purchase which could have been made collaboratively but wasn't has the rationale documented Ensure that supply chain is paid in a timely manner and in accordance with our contractual agreements.

Kent Fire and Rescue Service Climate Action Plan

In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report which advised that global warming must be limited to 1.5°C, as opposed to the previous target of 2°C. Source: [Global Warming of 1.5 °C - \(ipcc.ch\)](https://www.ipcc.ch)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's review of over 6,000 sources of evidence found that, with a rise of 1.5°C, there would be risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth. A rise to 2°C would be even more catastrophic. It warned that there are 12 years within which to take the serious action required to avert this crisis and avoid the worst impacts.

The Climate Change Committee (CCC), an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008, whose purpose is to advise the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets, recently reported that for the UK to reach 'carbon net zero' by 2050, there will have to be a quadrupling of low carbon electricity, major scale carbon capture and storage, and a fifth of our agricultural land must shift to alternative use. Source: [Reaching Net Zero in the UK - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://www.theccc.org.uk)

The predicted consequence of climate change is that there will be increased extreme weather events, and in many areas this is already being seen:

- Flooding – damage to property, disruption to business, health and wellbeing of displaced residents; Surface water flooding is estimated to affect 76,000 properties across Kent, 60,000 of which are residential. Source: [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy \(kent.gov.uk\)](https://www.kent.gov.uk)
- Heat and cold – health risk for vulnerable people, pressure on emergency and health services;
- Drought – pressure on river system health, depleted aquifer/reservoir volumes, negative impact upon agriculture, fire risk;
- Many terrestrial, freshwater, and marine species will shift their geographic ranges and seasonal activities, migration patterns.

Along with these reports and political commitments, there has been an increase in public concern and global activism on climate change and an increasing focus on broader sustainable development aims. In responding to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 's report and public calls for action, many local authorities have declared a climate change emergency.

In May 2019 Kent County Council declared a climate change emergency and agreed to a commitment of "net zero" emissions by 2050 in Kent. Kent Fire and Rescue Service pledges to make the service carbon neutral by 2030.

Useful Definitions

- Carbon Neutral
Means that all the carbon emissions you generate as a person or a business are offset, either by reducing your carbon emissions, or by counteracting your emissions through carbon absorbing projects such as sustainable reforestation.

To be carbon neutral, a business should be considering their own direct emissions as well as those that their suppliers create in relation to their business, and their customers create by using their products.

- Net-Zero

Net-Zero and Carbon Neutral are often used interchangeably but there are some important differences.

Net-zero includes other anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions such as methane and nitrous oxide (normally a product of agriculture, raising livestock and damming) as well as CO2.

Net-zero also includes a combination of both reducing and offsetting your carbon emissions. As a business you must reduce your emissions where possible and only offset any remaining emissions through greenhouse gas removals such as sustainable reforestation projects.

- Zero-Carbon

Zero-Carbon means that no carbon is emitted in the first place. For example, if a household or business used all solar energy, they would not need to offset this energy use as there are no emissions and they would be able to label themselves as Zero-Carbon.

In the “*Kent Strategy for Environment, Health & Economy - March 2016*”, in order to address national and local drivers and legislation, Kent County Council committed to reducing county wide CO2 emissions by 34% from a 2005 baseline by 2020. Source: [ANNEX 1 FINAL KES Low Resolution.pdf \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)

We have created an action plan working with managers and people around the Service with an interest in environmental issues, this is set out below and includes, where relevant, actions requested of councils by Friends of the Earth in their 50-point plan to tackle the climate and nature emergency and coronavirus recovery. Source: [Climate Action Plan for Councils \(takeclimateaction.uk\)](#)

Reference		Action Description	Target / Measure for Success	Owner	Target Date	Status	Comments
Behaviour	1.1	Secure leadership buy-in to sustainability matters.	Ensure that sustainability is discussed regularly with senior leadership teams.	All Heads of Departments	Ongoing	In Progress	This is a standing agenda item on both Estate & Fleet Management Boards.
	1.2	Introduce a corporate staff training module on sustainability and reducing energy usage both in the workplace and at home.	All staff trained on a sustainability module - will need to be in the induction so all new staff are trained.	L&OD	2021 Q4	In Progress	This has been procured and rolled out for all Property Services team members via First Health & Safety.
	1.3	Create a culture of sharing environmental information and ideas across KFRS.	Forum / SharePoint page to be created to share and feedback on ideas.	Property Services	-	Complete	Green Forum SharePoint page has been created for Green Forum members.
	1.4	Create and install signage across the estate to advise building users to turn off all computers, lights and other electronics that do not need to be left on.	Signage to be created and installed across estate.	Property Services / Customer Engagement & Safety	2021 Q4	Not Started	To be reviewed post Covid-19 as lots of covid-19 specific signage is currently in place across sites.
	1.5	Reduce travel requirements for meetings.	Provide systems to enable documentation to be shared electronically wherever possible and meetings to be held via video conferencing.	Business Change & Information Technology	-	Complete	AV systems are in place on stations to enable multi-site operational meetings. Skype/Teams also in use.
	1.6	Reduce paper requirements when sharing information, wherever possible.	Use emails or other digital communication instead of printed documents where possible.	All Heads of Departments	2022 Q4	In Progress	Means are underway to support this, but many documents are still on paper (albeit transitioning as a project e.g. HR files.) There remains a requirement for 'wet signature' on certain contracts.
	1.7	Effect an increase in the proportion of journeys taken by walking, cycling and public transport.	Provide sufficient secure bike racks & showers across sites.	Property Services	2023 Q4	In Progress	A Cycle to Work Salary Sacrifice Scheme contract was awarded in October 2020 (for 3 years).

	1.8	Reduce personal car usage through measures such as promoting car-sharing.	Promote car sharing using an internal KFRS system or a system already in place, such as: https://liftshare.com/uk	HR / Customer Engagement & Safety	2022 Q4	Not Started	To be considered post Covid-19
	1.9	Practice green procurement to achieve greater efficiency in the use of transport and packaging materials.	Sourcing and purchase the least environmentally damaging options.	Procurement	2022 Q4	In Progress	Work is underway on reducing excessive plastic sent on work wear orders and polystyrene on IT orders.
	1.10	Encourage staff to work from home wherever possible to reduce unnecessary journeys being made and reduce the occupation of office spaces.	Target to be agreed. Potentially number of staff on hybrid contracts excluding station-based staff?	CMB	2022 Q1	In Progress	Links to the People Plan and contract flexibility. To be reviewed post Covid-19
	1.11	Invest in indoor plants to help filter out air pollutants and emit oxygen into the air.	Consider investment in hard wearing low-maintenance plants which have a low pollen count (in case of allergies) at sites agreed within the Green Forum.	Property Services	2022 Q1	Not Started	Some plants are better at this than others; Spider Plants, Peace Lilies, English Ivy or Bamboo Palms. Suggest predominantly native if possible to reduce carbon footprint.
Property	2.1	Review sites to understand current carbon / energy performance and to underpin a programme of improvement works to improve insulation / carbon efficiency of the estate.	Full site sustainability review to be completed with reduction targets set against key areas for improvement.	Property Services	2022 Q2	Not Started	Pilot offices to be selected for carbon efficiency transformation, suggest using the current energy rating for each site to highlight priority areas.
	2.2	Consider third-party certification (i.e. BREEAM / WELL / LEED / Green Mark)	Aim to achieve a recognised sustainability accreditation for one or more sites.	Property Services	2025 Q4	Not Started	There is a cost associated with obtaining these certifications and any benefits in achieving one would have to be justified.

	2.3	Move to 'green' energy sources.	Find and switch to an energy supplier that can provide 100% green energy.	Procurement	2021 Q3	In progress	Current supply is brown energy. We have agreed to move to Green electricity in the current buying round - new contract starts 01/10/2021. Currently 'green' gas is a 30-40% cost increase so we are not transferring at this time, however LASER have been asked to forecast any impact on our carbon footprint by making this change.
	2.4	Monitor the usage of utilities through accurate metering.	Automatic meter readers (AMR) are installed but these are first generation, so are outdated and require a replacement programme	Property Services	2021 Q3	In progress	As part of our next round of energy buying, AMR upgrades have been offered as a free service by LASER.
	2.5	Monitor and adjust the usage of utilities through remote building management system (BMS) controls	Look to secure funds to install BMS (note: will attract an ongoing servicing and maintenance charge)	Property Services	2023 Q1	In progress	We have previously asked for grant funds to install/upgrade BMS (building management system) controls to remotely manage plant on site but have been unsuccessful so far.
	2.6	Increase the use of renewable energy installations such as solar (thermal or PV) or wind.	Engage with a consultant to create a feasibility study to detail the merits v costs in installing small wind turbines at some of our coastal stations to generate electricity.	Property Services	2023 Q1	In progress	37 buildings now have solar panels installed with over 350 kW of generating power.
	2.7	Retrofit buildings with heat pumps where possible.	Select properties identified in estate sustainability review that can be retrofit with heat pumps.	Property Services	2022 Q4	Not Started	

	2.8	Upgrade building insulation to meet modern standards where possible.	Select properties identified in estate sustainability review that can be retrofitted with additional insulation.	Property Services	2022 Q4	Not Started	In line with cyclical programme.
	2.9	Install absence/presence detection to lighting in areas where able to do so.	Select properties identified in estate sustainability review that can be retrofit with motion sensor lighting.	Property Services	2025 Q4	In Progress	Approx. 65% of estate complete so far.
	2.10	Replace standard incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) or LED bulbs wherever possible. These use around 75% less energy than standard incandescent light bulbs while delivering the same output.	Select properties identified in estate sustainability review where lighting can be replaced from standard incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) or LED bulbs.	Property Services	2025 Q4	In Progress	LED replacements to circa 65% of estate, old fittings and lights replaced with LED's as they fail or as areas are refurbished. Some properties have already been identified for additional replacements.
	2.11	Replace old boilers with energy efficient alternatives.	Identify and replace inefficient boilers.	Property Services	Ongoing	In Progress	
	2.12	Consider the use of Green Lighting Columns (wind and solar) on the bigger stations.	Review potential to install on the Ashford new build.	Property Services	2021 Q4	Not Started	
	2.13	Ensure that electrical equipment and white goods across the estate are energy efficient.	As contracts expire renew with purchase of energy efficient models.	Property Services	Ongoing	Not Started	
	2.14	Reduce the flow of water to showers.	All new showers to be installed with flow regulators.	Property Services	2025 Q4	In Progress	On ablution refit projects, the new showers being installed have flow regulators.
	2.15	Reduce the flow of water to taps.	All new taps to be installed with flow regulators.	Property Services	2025 Q4	In Progress	On ablution refit projects, the new taps being installed are

							regulated to 3.7 litres per minute.
	2.16	Reduce the flushing capacity of toilets.	In existing toilets, change the syphon to reduce consumption. In new installations, install smaller cisterns that are compatible with reduce capacity syphons.	Property Services	2025 Q4	In Progress	4-6 litre cisterns have been installed in new projects and will be in future.
	2.17	Request that cleaning contractors only use eco-friendly commercial cleaning products.	Discuss with cleaning contractors and consider including in supplier contracts as they come up for renewal.	Property Services / Procurement	2022 Q4	In Progress	Environmental and sustainability statements are already included in a number of invitations to tender and new innovations are being adopted.
	2.18	Use light wall colours; light paint colours reflect daylight, meaning office spaces will need less overhead lighting.	Review options to make the most of natural light to illuminate spaces.	Property Services	2021 Q4	Not Started	In line with cyclical programme.
	2.19	Reduce use of paper towels in washrooms and kitchens.	Replace paper towel dispensers with cloth towels or hand dryers.	Property Services	2022 Q1	Not Started	The use of paper towels was previously looked at but will be revisited.
	2.20	Reduce the number of fridges in use across the estate based on current need.	Identify fridges that are no longer required on sites and dispose of them appropriately.	Property Services	2021 Q4	In Progress	We have identified multiple fridges in some locations that are not used anywhere near capacity, which may be due to recent changes in station staffing levels, we will be looking to reduce these.

	2.21	Enable a shift to electric vehicles by installing electric vehicle charging points across the estate.	Install electric vehicle charging points as identified by the fleet & operations project.	Property Services / HR / Finance	2023 Q4	Not Started	This will require rewiring / installation of additional power supply in many of our current buildings. Tax implications for staff as a benefit in kind to be considered through HR.
Land Use	3.1	Manage KFRS-owned land to increase biodiversity and draw down carbon pollution, including reduced pesticide use and increased planting of wild meadows, bat boxes, newt habitats etc.	Identify land which can be utilised and introduce wild meadows, bat boxes, newt habitats etc.	Property Services	2021 Q4	In Progress	A Biodiversity Consultant has been appointed to create a Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan to consider habitat enhancements. We also have a section in the new grounds maintenance specification for innovation.
	3.2	Increase tree cover on KFRS-owned land, and ensure existing trees are properly protected, in order to store carbon, support nature, aid flood protection and deliver mental health benefits.	Identify land which can be utilised and increase tree cover through a structured planting regime.	Property Services	2021 Q4	In Progress	A Biodiversity Consultant has been appointed to create a Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan to consider tree cover.
Operations & Fleet	4.1	The introduction of Carbonaceous live fire rigs to provide enhanced training capability also reduces smoke impact from current gas models.	Consider additional locations where Carbonaceous live fire rigs can replace gas rigs.	L&OD	2022 Q4	In Progress	
	4.2	Collection and utilisation of grey water will contribute to reducing our carbon footprint.	Safely collect and utilise grey water where practical across estate (<i>Legionella risk in storage</i>).	Property Services	2022 Q4	Not Started	

	4.3	Reduce or remove the usage of petrol fuelled equipment.	Replace Hydraulic firefighting equipment with battery operated equipment.	Fleet and Equipment Services	2025 Q1	In Progress	We have hydraulic heavy rescue equipment that is due to be replaced shortly; there is now battery powered equipment available that we expect to replace it. There are also a number of other 'plant' items such as generators. The technology isn't there yet, but it is coming.
	4.4	Reduce restriction of operational van fleet due to specialist racking based on purpose i.e. hydrant technicians, BA transportation.	Enable multi-user usage of operational van fleet.	Fleet and Equipment Services	2025 Q1	In Progress	We still have some specialist dedicated vehicles which have fixed racking and stowage. We have standardised the internal layout of the more general panel vans we purchased this year and it is our intention to have a more modular system of stowage for all future vehicle builds.
	4.5	Reduce the need for operational crews to travel to one area for training at a centralised site.	Utilisation of 'blending learning' wherever possible.	L&OD	2022 Q3	In Progress	Links to the People Plan where one of our key activities is the transition to a more blended learning approach
	4.6	Utilise new and energy technologies to replace operational fleet with high emissions.	Consider the use of including new electric fire engines within the fleet as are being trialled in other counties.	Fleet and Equipment Services	2025 Q1	In Progress	KFRS is actively in discussions with other counties & monitoring trials
	4.7	Identify and drive a change in driving behaviours contributing to high emissions.	Telemetry tracking systems to be installed in fleet vehicles to monitor mileage and engine idling time.	Fleet and Equipment Services	-	Complete	

	4.8	Reduce age of light fleet to reduced overall average age of fleet and emissions collectively.	Oldest vehicles in light fleet to be disposed of.	Fleet and Equipment Services	-	Complete	Average light fleet age has now reduced from 10 years to c6 years
	4.9	75% of KFRS pool cars, vans and maintenance vehicles to be ultra-low emission or hybrid by 2030.	Target should be achievable in line with current replacement programme.	Fleet and Equipment Services	2030 Q1	In Progress	11 pool cars already swapped to Toyota Yaris hybrid models.
	4.10	Alternative transport options to be considered for ad-hoc short journeys instead of permanent fleet.	Reduce number of underutilised vehicles with other options such as taxi.	Fleet and Equipment Services	2023 Q1	In Progress	
	4.11	Procure new fleet vehicles in line with best practice environmental standards.	All new vehicles are purchased in line with Euro-6 diesel emission standards	Fleet and Equipment Services	2030 Q1	In Progress	We choose the highest standard of diesel engine; but we will be heading towards alternative fuelled vehicles as a matter of course. We currently only have 11 non-diesel vehicles.
	4.12	Recycle batteries in an ethically and environmentally friendly way.	Dispose of all depleted batteries (household and Lithium) sustainably	Operational Response	-	Complete	Recycled via Distribution Centre.
Waste	5.1	Aim to send no waste generated on site to landfill	0% waste to landfill	Property Services	2022 Q4	In Progress	This is already a tender requirement in part, for the reduction to landfill, including the use of certified waste carriers etc. but needs further work.

	5.2	Review waste streams to ensure that all recycling options that are available, are implemented.	Discuss with waste contractors and measure recycling rates.	Property Services	2022 Q1	In Progress	Only minimal amounts of food waste should be created on site following the implementation of the new PSF 03.2 - Kitchens and Food Preparation Policy, to be reviewed further.
	5.3	Promote community sharing and reuse to reduce waste and unnecessary consumption.	Utilise a 'station swap' or a charity donation process for furniture.	Property Services	2022 Q1	Not Started	
	5.4	Increase supplier responsibilities for environmental considerations e.g. to design out hard-to-recycle packaging.	Include environmental clauses into supplier contracts as they come up for renewal.	Property Services / Procurement	2025 Q1	Not Started	
	5.5	Reduce the number of non-segregated bins in the office to increase recycling across estate.	Place a few centrally located bins and removing personal bins under each desk.	Property Services	-	Complete	
	5.6	Clearly identify waste streams to increase recycling opportunities and reduce cross-contamination of bins.	Clearly label general waste and recycling with what items can be put in each receptacle.	Property Services	-	Complete	
	5.7	Reduce plastic and paper waste in kitchen and mess areas.	Invest in reusable silverware and serving utensils.	Property Services	-	Complete	
	5.8	Encourage use of reusable water bottles.	Supply water coolers on site.	Fleet and Equipment & Property Services	-	Complete	Branded water bottles were provided in 2020 to all KFRS employees. 7-year contract in place to supply and maintain water coolers to every station.

E	6.1	Use laptops instead of desktop computers which use less energy.	Reduce use of desktop computers, using personal issue laptops instead.	Business Change & Information Technology	-	Complete	
	6.2	Preserve battery life and reduce power consumption when IT devices are not in use.	Enable power-saving or sleep mode on all IT equipment.	Business Change & Information Technology	-	Complete	
	6.3	Multi-functional devices (MFD's) that can print, copy and scan documents use much less energy than individual machines and have been proven to reduce overuse, because employees who have to walk to a shared machine are less likely to do so unnecessarily.	Replace fleet of printers, scanners and fax machines with multi-functional devices (MFD's) across the Estate.	Business Change & Information Technology	-	Complete	
	6.4	Cloud storage services eliminate the need for recycling because there are no local hard drives to replace. Power usage is also reduced as cloud servers have a design that uses all the energy as efficiently as possible.	Move to a Cloud based storage system rather than using local servers.	Business Change & Information Technology	-	Complete	
	6.5	Reduce the volume of paper and ink used in user printing	Default printing settings to double sided and monochrome.	Business Change & Information Technology	-	Complete	

	6.6	In line with the target of sending zero waste to landfill, ensure that redundant IT equipment is disposed of sustainably.	Sustainably dispose of all redundant IT equipment, sending none to landfill.	Business Change & Information Technology	-	In Progress	We have engaged with PRM Green Technologies who are a recycling company, with an objective to keep IT out of landfill. They also will resell the assets where possible in order to remain financially viable. They will take any IT related items free of charge, including cables or any WEEE item.
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Business Change, Information and Technology Strategy

2021 – 2025

Working together towards a safer Kent and Medway



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service

together

Introduction

Our Business Change, Information and Technology Strategy is one of six strategies, and sets out our programme of work for the next four years. It outlines how and why we will invest in technology, to improve the service delivered to all customers.

The last few years has seen huge change in the technology available to everyone. Computing power has increased hugely. The development of cloud storage of data allows almost unlimited data storage and access. We want to harness technology to give everyone that works for us the tools to do their jobs efficiently and effectively, recording data once and using it in several places. We want the right devices in the hands of the right people, be they desktop computers, laptops, phones, drones, cameras or tablet devices and we want to buy them in the cost-effective way.

We are aware that amongst our workforce is a wide range of needs, from on-call firefighters, full-time firefighters, corporate teams and volunteers. There are a wide range of very specialist and technical roles, especially in the Business Safety team. But we also know that 1 in 6 adults in England have very poor literacy skills. Whilst we have made progress in ensuring equality of access for everyone that works for us, have changed the range of devices, the ways content is delivered to them, and we have invested in speak aloud technology, there is more we need to do to ensure everyone can perform and keep themselves and ultimately, our customers, safe.

We provide technology that allows those colleagues that can, to work from home. We used this a lot during the COVID pandemic, and are looking to extend the provision into business as usual. To do this effectively we will review how we connect all our devices virtually to our network to make sure it is resilient. This action will also contribute to reducing the carbon emissions associated with commuting.

We have brought together our business change and technology strategy and our performance and data strategy for the first time. We have invested in the Business Change, Information and Technology Team, and supplemented it with the critical role of project management and business analysis. Highly skilled Project Managers and Business Analysts will work alongside subject matter experts to redesign processes and define system and business requirements that maximise efficiency in the work undertaken by the Service.

Over the next four years we aim to use technology to make our processes simple, secure and always available when people need them.

The strategy is designed to support the organisation's overall corporate plan, known as the Customer Safety Plan. Our corporate aims are:

- Responding effectively in times of customer need;
- Promoting behaviours which help you stay safe and well in your home;
- Encouraging you to adopt behaviours which keep you safe on the roads;
- Supporting businesses to help people to stay safe in their buildings and comply with legislation;
- Helping you and the broader community to stay safe from harm caused by accidents, natural events or people intending harm.

Strategic Assessment and Action Plan

Our Business Change, Information and Technology strategy is supported by an assessment which brings together all of the insight, evidence and data we've used to develop this blueprint.

This includes:

- National and international research on the technology landscape
- The ten-year forward assessment of risks and challenges presented in the Customer Safety Plan 2021/25
- An analysis conducted by the business change, information and technology team of what the future may look like
- A strengths and weaknesses analysis conducted by the business change, information and technology team
- Engagement across the organisation, capturing what everyone that works for us thinks the future holds
- Operational debriefs of incidents we have attended

- Feedback received by each team from completed projects

We have developed an action plan which is a 'live' document and will be updated regularly by the Corporate Services strategy board. The action plan outlines the activities we need to complete to implement the strategy.

Our priorities

Key objectives

Priority one Deliver Business Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully align our portfolio management processes to the budget development cycle and Service governance. • Develop the Business Change function to improve management of the Portfolio of Projects, Project Delivery, Business Analysis and Customer Engagement. • Focus project scope to align to 'minimum viable product' concept to ensure resources are targetted to strategically important tasks.
Priority two Transforming Customer Service Through Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate our 999 Control Room and implement the latest technology including multi-agency incident transfer arrangements. • Prepare for the Emergency Services Network. • Exploit our risk management system fully by using it to manage more processes. • Improve incident ground communications, data capture and sharing.
Priority three Developing the Next Generation of System Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain pace with supplier roadmaps, utilising new features as they become available. • Replace systems which are not fit for purpose. • Enable mobile working.

<p>Priority four</p> <p>Maintaining Highly Available and Secure Technology Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake upgrades and patching processes to reduce the risk of a cyber attack. • Continue to move services to the cloud, reducing the burden on IT resources. • Support new hybrid working, enabling colleagues to work from anywhere. • Continue to use data securely and ethically.
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Priority one – Deliver Business Change

Why do we need to do this?

Delivery of all our corporate strategies rely upon our ability to deliver change initiatives. We have established good project management practices which were praised in an external project maturity assessment, but there are some specific areas that can be further improved upon.

We need to mature our portfolio prioritisation processes to ensure we deliver our strategic ambitions. This means having project prioritisation in place to allocate resources to those projects which return the highest value for our customers and maximise our resources. We will enhance our project planning processes to fully align with our annual governance and financial management processes and utilise the latest project methodologies which will help us ensure that those elements that bring the most value are delivered first.

Achievements 2017-21

- We have joined the technology project management and corporate project management teams together in one Business Change Function.
- We have recruited experienced project managers and now have a team of business analysts to work alongside subject matter experts to redesign processes and define system and business requirements that maximise efficiency.
- We have created a range of industry standard project documentation practices and support for project managers and continue the evolution of project management practices.
- We have embedded wider internal participation and customer in our projects.
- We have successfully deployed a practice known as Agile for technology projects.
- Business led steering groups are in place to lead the development of technology services, driven by business sponsors to ensure that work is fulfilling business needs first.

Where next?

- The creation of a single Business Change Function combining IT and Corporate project capabilities will be further progressed with a redesign of the Project Management functions.
- Continue to review our resource planning processes to ensure that we can deliver our annual portfolio of projects.
- Review the annual project planning cycle to fully align with financial planning and corporate governance.
- Develop a new stage gate governance process and delivery assurance mechanism.
- We will make portfolio planning more sophisticated, taking into account business as usual pressures when resourcing projects.
- Business Analysts will continue to be assigned to projects, working with business representatives and technical experts to ensure solutions are business and customer led.
- We will also develop the Senior User Project role, making excellent use of subject matter expertise to lead the development of new capabilities.
- New capabilities will be available quicker, deploying Agile practices where appropriate.
- We will utilise the concept of “minimum viable products” when scoping projects to ensure that delivering value quickly is the key focus of all projects, reducing projects where possible into smaller more manageable pieces of work.
- Participation from internal and external customers will broaden project viewpoints.
- New quarterly resource allocation processes for in-flight projects will reduce competition for scarce resources.

What does success look like?

- We will have an annual plan for projects, which is realistic and considers the scarcity of some internal resources.
- Project approval processes will be synchronised with corporate governance and financial management processes.
- Prioritisation will be aligned to corporate objectives using business cases which will be reviewed annually.

- An effective prioritisation process will be in place which ensures that those projects that will deliver the highest value for customers are resourced first.
- We will develop the Product Manager/Senior User role further, ensuring that projects are customer led.
- Corporate projects will be managed by professional Project Managers, further developing project management skills that are already present within the Service.
- Projects will be governed using stage gates and delivery assurance will be undertaken by experienced project specialists.
- **How will we measure performance against our objectives?**

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Project Timelines	Decrease in the number of projects overrunning their original schedule.
Project Planning	Reduction in the number of projects in-flight at any one time.
Senior User/Product Manager	Projects will have dedicated Senior User/Product Managers to represent the voice of the end user and ensure the output meets the needs of those that will be using it.
Smaller Projects	Reduction in the size of projects, focusing on essential deliverables only.
Professional Project Managers	Corporate projects of all sizes and complexity will be managed by professional project managers.

Priority two – Transforming Customer Service Through Technology

Why do we need to do this?

Providing information to enable good incident management decisions and reducing risk is at the heart of this strand, building on the work from the previous strategy. It also supports the work we do to prevent incidents from occurring in the first place. We have been working to provide an organisation-wide view of risk and have developed our technology to bring building safety and customer data onto the same platform as our premises risk data.

This priority also focuses on the speed at which information is captured, with the ongoing deployment of tablet devices and associated software for fieldwork to increase the efficiency of capturing, processing and sharing of data. It also seeks to improve the sharing of data between our 999-call team and our responders, reducing our reliance upon voice communication.

Achievements 2017-21

- We invested in new equipment to ensure that obsolete technology was replaced, including mobile data terminals, fireground radios and mobile phones.
- The deployment of tablet devices has enabled colleagues to work more efficiently when undertaking risk inspection activities.
- We have re-written our Incident Recording System, so this is no longer reliant upon out of date technologies and is fit for purpose.
- We have developed our own knowledge of the Police mobilising system so that we can develop products which integrate with it effectively.
- We have responded to the findings from the Grenfell and Kerslake Inquiries implementing changes to radio talkgroups to improve communications between our emergency service partners.
- We have invested in technology to provide firefighters with improved risk data.

Where next?

- Continue to support colleagues to make best use of technology as it advances.
- We will focus on improving data provided to firefighters and incident commanders both when in transit and at the incident ground. This is to be done through the deployment of devices, and the progressive evolution of our software and the implementation of Emergency Services Network.
- To improve communications we will focus on data transmission of incident messages, instead of voice.
- Digital data capture systems for risk assessments and for decision logging will be developed.
- The flow of information through the Service from survival calls will be improved.
- A central repository for all incident data to better support our operational assurance process will be developed.
- Station end software will be upgraded and advances in on-call alerting technology will be considered so we can move away from pagers which are very old technology and getting harder to support.
- Access to the National Guidance Portal will be provided when this becomes available.
- Working at a national level with the National Fire Chiefs' Council we aim to lead work with the fire technology market to respond to Grenfell and other events, driving suppliers to bring their offerings up to date and assist with the modernisation of fire services.
- We will continue to contribute resources to the project to replace the Airwave network and maximise the opportunities provided by its replacement when available.
- Following the announcement to close the current site at Kent Police headquarters, our Control Room will be re-located to an appropriate site working collaboratively with our Police partners in the design of our future 999 call handling provision.
- A review of the technologies within the Control Room will be undertaken to determine future systems required to enable a partnership with another fire service for additional resilience.
- "Multi Agency Incident Transfer" will be deployed, when it becomes available, to quicken the mobilising of resources between emergency services.
- Innovation in the control room, including smart phone video feeds and social media alerting will be explored.
- We will develop a system for fire investigation case management.
- A means for external customers to book home visits online will be enabled.
- The out of date incident commanders training system will be replaced.

- The Command Support Units will be upgraded with a focus on connectivity to improve data sharing.

What does success look like?

- Those responding to incidents will have access to all the risk information held by the Service, when they need it.
- Sharing of real-time information including photos/videos will be available.
- Mobile devices will be widely used to capture data, improving efficiency and speed that the information is available to share with colleagues.
- Operational colleagues will be less reliant upon voice, with data routinely exchanged between our 999 call team and responders digitally.
- Our 999 call team will be re-located, with an Incident Management facility located within the same building.
- A new partnership with another fire and rescue service will be in place, enabling another Service to mobilise our resources for business continuity.
- Our 999 call team will move to a Computer Aided Dispatch system that is designed for a fire and rescue service.
- Mobilising of resources between Emergency Services will be undertaken using multi-agency incident transfer.
- Customers will be able to share footage of an incident with Control and Responders.
- Fire Investigations will be managed as cases through the Dynamics system.
- Customers will be able to book routine visits online.
- On-call responders will be alerted to an incident via a Smart phone App.
- Connectivity at the incident ground will be improved, enabling better communications and data sharing.

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Incident software and technology	Incident Commanders and Responders can quickly access information they need to manage the incident without relying on voice. They can access 'real-time' customer and building risk data.
Fire Survival Guidance	The 999 call team and those at incident ground are all working from the same 'real-time' fire survival guidance data.
ESN	Airwave radios have been replaced with ESN devices and are being used to share photos and videos.
Electronic Data Capture	100% of risk assessments and decision logs are undertaken digitally. Paper records have been removed.
On-Call Mobilising	On-call colleagues are mobilised utilising an App on a SMART phone by April 2024.
Control	The Control Room has been successfully relocated by 2023, and IT solutions are fit for purpose, Fire buddy arrangements are in place. Emergency services are using multi-agency incident transfer rather than voice to request assistance.
Incident Command Training	The incident command system has been replaced.
Devices for Field Work	Devices are used to collect data efficiently in the field and speed up the sharing of information.

Priority three – Developing the Next Generation of System Capabilities

Explanation section

The Service is dependent upon a range of assets and resources in the delivery of our services. Service delivery is underpinned by applications that support the management of information, people, finances, vehicles, equipment, buildings and hydrants. These applications need to be fit for purpose as well as up to date to ensure that we can obtain support from suppliers. This might happen if we experience problems with a system but also so we can make use of the latest capabilities as these become available. Therefore, maintaining pace with supplier roadmaps will remain a key focus in this strategy. Now that we have brought all the systems up to date, it has been possible to determine which applications are fit for purpose and those that do not enable departments to manage their tasks effectively. It is our plan over the next 5 years to procure new systems where current capabilities are inadequate and deploy new features for those applications which are fit for purpose, as useful functionality becomes available.

Achievements 2017-21

- We have conducted major upgrades to our finance, workforce planning and fleet management business applications so they are fully supported by suppliers.
- The file storage system and Intranet has been migrated to a software as a service offering, making good use of new capabilities for storing data used by individual departments.
- The deployment of 'Swipe to Drive' has provided easy access to vehicle usage data to feed into our vehicle replacement programme.
- We have provided firefighters with the first phase of new software on their mobile data terminals
- We have migrated our Learning Management System to a specialist hosting provider.
- We have implemented a fit for purpose IT Helpdesk system for the IT Helpdesk.

Where next?

- The implementation of an asset management system will replace multiple systems that are currently used to manage operational equipment and vehicles.
- A computer aided facilities management system will be deployed to manage building assets.
- The rostering application will be replaced to remove the use of inefficient and inaccessible local spreadsheets to roster and manage people resources. This will also improve the ability to quickly identify resources available to attend protracted incidents.
- We will replace the legacy Hydrant system, providing more efficient hydrant management information exploring the ability to migrate this functionality into the Dynamics application.
- Microsoft 365 tools will continue to be developed to replace excel and word documents currently used to manage internal tasks such as ordering goods.
- As new capabilities become available, such as bots, these will be implemented where these bring efficiency or enhance customer experience.
- We will also seek to maximise the use of automation for transactional processes.
- We will also review the stand alone digital learning platform.

What does success look like?

- Rostering is efficient with all rostering processes managed from a single system which is easy to use, particularly for on-call colleagues.
- Rostering information is easier to access, making it easier to manage resources for large protracted incidents.
- Appliance availability is easily accessible to those outside of Control.
- Vehicle and operational assets maintenance are managed from a single system making it easier to meet legislative requirements in relation to planned maintenance.

- A fit for purpose solution is used to manage our buildings and facilities.
- A supported Hydrant Management System is available.
- SharePoint tools are deployed to make day to day tasks easier to perform.
- Data to support the People Plan is available.

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
Rostering	A central rostering system is available replacing crewing spreadsheets, with all crewing data available from a single system. Crews will be able to access rostering information from a smart phone.
Vehicle and Operational Assets	Vehicle and operational assets are managed from a single system making it easier to keep on top of planned maintenance.
Building Assets	An appropriate product is used for managing building assets and facilities making building maintenance and compliance more efficient.
Hydrants	A Hydrant Management system is available that enables mobile data entry.
Digital Learning	A feature rich and integrated digital learning system is available.

Priority four – Maintaining Highly Available and Secure Technology Services

Why do we need to do this?

Maintaining high availability of the technology services on which all everyone that works for us relies upon, requires a focus on maintenance as well as moving forward innovation projects. Like other organisations we are driven by product roadmaps, with the Service forced to upgrade software and hardware to maintain vendor support which is essential to achieve high availability and gain the greatest protection from cyber criminals. There is a continual need to upgrade server and desktop operating systems, databases and interrogation tools for data analysis, and all business applications. This is in addition to replacing hardware before it becomes unsupportable or end of life.

Cyber security will become an even higher priority as the replacement for Airwave will require a higher level of security to be in place. This will require the service to obtain a new security certification forcing the continuing need to respond to vendor product roadmaps in upgrading and patching software.

In responding to the Pandemic, we were able to conduct our business virtually largely due to the foresight to provide laptops rather than fixed desktop devices and remote services infrastructure. Conducting business virtually has also been possible due to the rapid deployment of Microsoft Teams, also reducing costs associated with work related travel, contributing to the delivery of the Authority's climate impact reduction plan.

Achievements 2017-21

- We have migrated to Microsoft cloud offerings for risk information, email, backup, document storage and our Intranet, improving the technical support we get, and reducing the burden of supporting on-premises services.
- We have migrated our virtual learning platform for everyone that works for us to a vastly improved hosting environment.
- A review of network circuits has enabled financial savings to be achieved.
- We have increased expertise, assisted by providing to suitable on-line learning material and apprenticeships to help build technical skill and knowledge of best practice.

- We have worked with the National Cyber Security Centre to identify and reduce the threat from a cyber-attack. This work has driven the deployment of a new password policy, multi-factor authentication and single sign-on across all applications, reducing cyber risk whilst making our systems simple to log in to.
- We have been awarded a National Cyber Security Centre security accreditation.

Where next?

- Audio visual equipment on stations will be replaced where we need to, to provide a better way to consume online learning.
- Products will be regularly replaced to improve reliability and take advantage of new functionality.
- We will procure a new managed print service, moving away from a lease arrangement
- We will support the re-procurement of the wide area network (in conjunction with Kent County Council and the wider partnership).
- To better manage redundant devices, we will develop a disposal contract which recycles or destroys devices in compliance with our legal duties, without contributing to landfill.
- We will continue with our Cloud first strategy, replacing applications with software as a service as this has the potential to free up vital resources from essential maintenance.
- As COVID restrictions ease and a new way of working emerges, we will adapt our technology solutions to the new ways of working, enhancing solutions used at home so they are as resilient as when working in the office.
- We will look to convert paper files to digital to enable remote access to key information and securely enable access to documents from personal devices.
- We will help people change their behaviour so that they do not feel the need to print and store paper copies of documents.
- We will be providing technology that enables colleagues to maintain connection with each other when working at home or in the office to improve work life balance.
- We will continue to follow National Cyber Security Centre guidelines and seek validation from a 3rd party that we have effective controls and tools in place to reduce the risk of a cyber-attack. This includes achieving the Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation in readiness for the new Emergency Services Network.
- We will continue to protect data by implementing appropriate information security practices.

- A single helpdesk service for all technology queries will be implemented, to enable better customer service.
- We will develop further our approach to the ethical use of data, reflecting best practise from the university sector when it conducts primary research into behaviour and motivations of our customers.
- Wherever we can, we will draw in data from partners to inform how we should develop our services.
- We will further develop our data capabilities to bring data together across the Service in order to improve business intelligence.

What does success look like?

We will continue to work in partnership with Kent County Council and remain committed to the Kent Public Services Network.

We will upgrade devices to Windows 10 and Office 365.

New applications will be cloud based, 'software as a service'.

We will make increasing use of artificial intelligence capabilities as these become available.

Colleagues working from home will have access to resilient services, providing high availability of IT services and be able to access all digital information.

Colleagues will be able to use personal devices to access learning materials and intranet content.

We will continue our focus on maintenance tasks, prioritising security and product supportability.

We will continue to have an annual penetration test utilising a 3rd party to examine our defence against a cyber-attack.

How will we measure performance against our objectives?

The indicators below will be used by teams, together with a range of other local measures, to monitor progress towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Description	Indicator
IT Infrastructure	IT Infrastructure is optimised for those working from home.
Digital Files	There is a digital capability for converting paper-based files.

Patching and Maintenance	We will continue to patch servers and client software in line with National Cyber Security Centre's guidance.
Operating Systems	All operating systems (client and server) will be supported by Microsoft.
Corporate Devices	Corporate devices will be upgraded to Windows 10 & Office 365.
Personal Devices	Personal devices will be able to securely access KFRS data.
Security Certification	We will achieve Cyber Essential Plus Certification in readiness for ESN.

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By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021

Subject: FINAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2020/21

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR INFORMATION

SUMMARY

This report provides Members with information relating to the final outturn on revenue and capital spend for 2020/21 and includes details of the resultant transfer to Earmarked Reserves.

Key points to note are:

- The 2020/21 revenue budget underspend was £2.837m against a budget of £74.258m;
- The 2020/21 capital outturn was £3.517m against the revised capital budget of £3.711m.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Note that this report confirms that the final balance of the underspend, now being transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve is £1.837m (paragraph 2 refers);
2. Consider and note the contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Finance Manager – Barrie Fullbrook
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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Revenue Budget Outturn for 2020/21

1. The final outturn on the revenue budget is a net underspend of £2.837m against a budget of £74.258m, which is a net increase of £80k compared to the forecast underspend of £2.757m reported to the Authority on 27 April 2021.
2. As agreed by Members in April, £1m of the final underspend will be transferred to the Infrastructure Reserve to fund improvements and alterations at various premises across the County, and the balance (now confirmed at £1.837m) will be transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve to provide funding for any unbudgeted pressures that may arise in later years. Members may wish to note that despite the Government's announcement in November 2020, that public sector pay will be "paused" for 2021/22, pay negotiations have been progressing nationally for all pay groups. At the time of drafting this report, two of the three nationally agreed pay awards have been settled at 1.5% and confirmation is awaited on the third. Following the Government's announcement, no pay award was budgeted for 2021/22, so if a pay award is agreed it is likely that some, or all, of the cost will need to be met from reserves in 2021/22. Every 1% increase will add an additional unbudgeted annual pressure of approximately £600k to the revenue budget from 2022/23.
3. 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**.
4. 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. At the end of the year, £991k was transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund commitments made in 2020/21, but where the associated costs would not be incurred until after 31 March 2021. During the year, £287k was transferred from the reserve to fund expenditure committed in 2019/20 but not incurred until 2020/21, making the net movement an increase on the Rolling Budget Reserve £704k for 2020/21.
5. The largest items included within the Rolling Budget Reserve closing balance of £1.074m are £366k for delayed premises works; £165k for fitness equipment; £126k for fleet servicing and maintenance; £94k for training expenditure and; £55k for water hydrant repairs. Other minor items totalled £268k.

Capital Budget Outturn for 2020/21 and the Infrastructure Plan

6. The final outturn against the revised capital budget of £3.711m, is an outturn of £3.517m, resulting in a net variance of £194k. Details of the Infrastructure Plan (including the Capital Budget) are attached at **Appendix 5**.

General and Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2021

7. Details of the final year-end balances on reserves and capital receipts are shown at **Appendix 6**.
8. **General Reserves** - For 2020/21 the policy, agreed by Members, was to maintain the General Reserve balance at approximately 5% of the net revenue budget. In line with this requirement, the General Reserve position as at 31 March 2021 has increased by £200k to £3.710m.
9. **Earmarked Reserves** - Earmarked reserves at the start of the financial year were £29.899m and, after year-end net transfers to reserves, including the £2.837m underspend detailed above, the balance at the end of the financial year was £38.221m. Aside from the transfer of the underspend into earmarked reserves, there is still a significant increase in the closing balance for the year of some £5.485m. An element of this has been explained above (£704k) as a rolling reserve adjustment, but by far the largest increase (£4.867m) relates to an increase in the Government grant reserve balance, which is explained in paragraph 12 below.
10. **Capital Receipts** - the year opened with a balance of £9.2m and there were no disposals / sales of property during 2020/21, however one vehicle was sold during the year. A number of vacant day crewed houses and two further sites are due to be disposed of during 2021/22. The closing balance for the year was £7.8m after £1.3m was utilised to fund vehicle purchases during 2020/21.

Other Finance Issues

11. **Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators** - Full details of the Treasury position and the Prudential Indicators for 2020/21 are contained in the Treasury Management Annual Report, which appears elsewhere on this agenda.
12. **Government Grants** - In 2020/21, the Authority received £13.148m of revenue grants, a significant increase on 2019/20 (£6.941m). As in previous years these grants included; funding for New Dimensions and New Threats related work £1.030m; Firelink £624k and its replacement Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) £69k; small business rate relief grant of £1.371m and; a grant towards the

additional cost due to increased employer pension contribution rates £3.536m. The Office of the Rail Regulator paid £57k towards the cost of work carried out by the Authority for the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority, £104k was drawn down from the apprenticeship levy and £8k was received towards the cost of complying with the Transparency Code.

13. In addition, the Authority received new one-off grant funding in 2020/21 to cover costs incurred as a result of the introduction of the Fire Safety Bill (now The Fire Safety Act 2021), implemented as a result of the Grenfell incident. Grant funding, totalling £619k, was provided to the Authority to support Fire and Rescue Services in making sustained progress in implementing the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report, improving resilience for major incidents (Grenfell Infrastructure Grant), to carry out a review of all high-rise residential buildings over 18m (Building Risk Review Grant), bolster fire protection activity (Protection Uplift Grant) and support the accreditation and recognised prior learning costs of fire protection officers and fire safety engineers (Protection Accreditation Grant). The Authority also received additional ESMCP infrastructure grant totalling £250k and a grant of £97k towards the administrative costs of implementing the remedy for the McCloud/Sargeant pension case. Additionally, a grant totalling £3.175m was confirmed to compensate the Authority for lost business rates income as a result of the additional retail and hospitality reliefs granted by the Government for 2020/21. This grant is offset by a large deficit on the business rates collection fund which will be recovered from the Authority, by District Council's and Medway Council, in 2021/22.
14. The Authority also received additional grant funding, totalling £1,589k, to cover costs incurred as a result of Covid-19. This funding has been utilised in a variety of ways, for example covering additional staffing costs incurred by providing support to partner organisations to help deliver additional support to those in need, purchases of personal protective equipment, changes required to our estate in order to comply with Covid-19 guidelines and extra costs incurred purchasing IT hardware and software in order to facilitate better remote working. The Government also announced a support package to partly cover the irrecoverable council tax and business rate loss of income in 2020/21, whereby 75% of losses incurred (estimated at £619k) will be funded by Government Grant.

Firefighters' Pension Fund 2020/21

15. Attached at **Appendix 7** is the final outturn of the Firefighters' Pension Fund for 2020/21.
16. Additional contributions into the Pension Fund, for ill health retirements, pensions not abated and transfer values, means that the top-up grant requirement has reduced by £434k compared to the amount forecast when the Home Office return was submitted in August 2020.

17. The 2020/21 unaudited return has been submitted to the Home Office and payment of the balance of the deficit in the fund, totalling £2.003m, is expected in July, along with 80% of the estimated top-up grant requirement for 2021/22.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

18. Of the final underspend on the revenue budget, £1m will be transferred to the Infrastructure Reserve to fund improvements and alterations at various premises across the County, and the balance (now confirmed at £1.837m) will increase the level of the Insurance and Resource Reserve to provide funding for any unbudgeted pressures that may arise in later years.
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 Note that this report confirms that the final balance of the underspend, now being transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve is £1.837m (paragraph 2 refers);
 - 20.2 Consider and note the contents of the report.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2020/21 Revenue Budget – Subjective Analysis

Figures shown are in £'000	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance to Budget
Salaries, allowances and on-costs	61,770	59,483	-2,287
Training expenses	754	451	-303
Other employee costs(incl. Insurance)	684	821	137
Direct pension costs	1,889	2,141	252
Total Employee Costs	65,097	62,896	-2,201
Repairs, maintenance & other costs	2,358	2,119	-239
Utility costs	2,393	2,284	-109
Total Premises Costs	4,751	4,403	-348
Vehicle running costs	2,206	2,020	-186
Travel allowances and expenses	90	46	-44
Total Transport Costs	2,296	2,066	-230
Equipment and supplies	2,840	2,481	-359
Fees and services	1,304	1,271	-33
Communications and computing	4,087	3,672	-415
Other supplies and services	685	518	-167
Total Supplies and Services	8,916	7,942	-974
Capital financing costs	1,042	1,049	7
Revenue contributions to Capital	2,340	2,146	-194
Total Capital Financing	3,382	3,195	-187
Grants and contributions	-8,430	-14,289	-5,859
Investment income	-236	-60	176
Other income	-310	-417	-107
Transfers to reserves	-1,208	5,685	6,893
Total Income	-10,184	-9,081	1,103
Net Budget	74,258	71,421	-2,837

Reconciliation of reserve movement to the reserves table at Appendix 6:

Net transfer to reserves as per outturn detailed above	5,685
Net budget variance (underspend) as detailed above	2,837
Total net transfer to revenue reserves as per Appendix 6	8,522

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Significant Variances and Movements in the 2020/21 Revenue Budget

The net underspend of £2.837m is made up of a variety of over and underspends, but it also reflects areas of spend that may need to be 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 (£2.287m Underspend)** - The final underspend on pay budget headings has increased by £140k compared to the forecast position reported to Members at the Authority meeting on 27 April 2021 (£2.147m). The increase in the underspend is mainly due to on-call and wholetime activity payments which are paid two months in arrears and can vary quite significantly from month-to-month. Further explanations for the most significant underspends are provided in the Functional Variance Analysis at **Appendix 4**.
- (b) **Training expenses (£303k Underspend)** - Wholetime recruit training was delivered in the County, so there was a saving of £58k due to the recruits not attending a residential course as initially planned. The budget allocated for training Corporate Teams apprentices also underspent by £58k as a number of these posts remained vacant during the year and have subsequently been deleted from the establishment for 2021/22. The Covid-19 pandemic saw various training venues close during 2020/21 resulting in some courses being cancelled altogether and others delivered in a different way, at a reduced cost to the Authority, leading to additional underspend against the training budget of £187k. Within this £187k, some courses have been postponed so £110k has been rolled forward in the Rolling Budget Reserve for use in 2021/22.
- (c) **Other Employee Costs (£137k Overspend)** - There is a net overspend against employee related insurance premiums, insurance excesses and provisions, which are adjusted each year-end following discussions with the Authority's insurers.
- (d) **Direct Pension Costs (£252k Overspend)** - The budget provides for two ill-health retirements per year but there were a total of four ill-health retirements in 2020/21 resulting in an overspend of £113k. There were also additional Local Government Pensions strain costs, additional Firefighter Pension Scheme sanction charges and backdated contributions to the Pension Fund for unabated pensions.
- (e) **Repairs, maintenance and other costs (£239k Underspend)** - The premises repairs and maintenance budget has underspent by £218k due to Covid-19 restrictions limiting the amount of works carried out in 2020/21, so this underspend is offset by a transfer to reserves for use in 2021/22. Other minor net underspends total £21k.

- (f) **Utility costs (£109k Underspend)** - The budget for electricity supplies underspent by £59k, mainly due to reduced costs resulting from the new contract, which is reflected in the reduced budget allocation for 2021/22. The budget for gas supplies underspent by £31k, mainly due to less usage as a result of lower building occupancy levels throughout the year due to Covid-19. Other minor net underspends total £19k.
- (g) **Vehicle running costs (£186k Underspend)** - The final underspend against the fuel budget is £292k, mainly due to a decrease in normal activity levels and by making use of BP's offer of free fuel to all emergency services during periods of the pandemic. This is partly offset by increased vehicle servicing and maintenance costs due to the increasing age profile of the current fleet. Of the underspend, £126k has been transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund vehicle servicing costs which have slipped to 2021/22.
- (h) **Equipment and supplies (£359k Underspend)** - The Covid-19 pandemic meant that there was a reduction in the number of Safe and Well visits and Home Fire Safety visits carried out in 2020/21 resulting in an underspend of £98k on equipment purchases, such as smoke alarms. However, as it is anticipated that an increased number of Safe and Wells visits will be carried out in 2021/22, to address this backlog, £20k of the £98k underspend will be carried forward as a transfer to the Rolling Budget Reserve for use in 2021/22. Budgets for office printing, stationery, janitorial items and refreshments have underspent by £119k where staff have been working from home and meetings have been carried out online. In addition, the clothing and workwear budget was underspent by £59k where ad-hoc spend has been lower than originally anticipated. Other minor net underspends total £83k.
- (i) **Communications and computing (£415k Underspend)** - Expenditure on the Website Upgrade project (£40k), Network Upgrade project (£79k), Cloud Migration project (£18k), Command and Control project (£10k) and Device Re-procurement project (£9k), has been rephased to 2021/22 so these are offset by a transfer to reserves. The remaining underspend has arisen from a reduction in the use of consultancy services in relation to various IT projects totalling £126k. The KFRS share of costs towards the Kent Services Public Network have reduced by £46k due to more partners joining the scheme. The Airwave service charge has reduced now that the core power upgrade costs and previous call-off items have stopped being charged resulting in an underspend of £46k. Other minor underspends totalled £41k.
- (j) **Other supplies and services (£167k Underspend)** - As a result of lockdown measures introduced by the Government to combat Covid-19 there was significant reduction in conference expenses resulting in an underspend of £50k. An element of the Collaboration budget allocated for grants and contributions underspent by £82k and other minor net underspends total £35k.

- (k) **Revenue Contributions to Capital (£194k Underspend)** - This variance relates to the underspend reported against the capital budget shown at **Appendix 5**.
- (l) **Grants and contributions (£5.859m Additional Income)** - The Authority accounted for several unbudgeted government grants in 2020/21. The first of these grants covers the cost of the additional business rates reliefs granted by the Government for 2020/21 amounting to £3.175m, and the second is to cover 75% of irrecoverable Collection Fund losses, estimated at £619k. Both grants have been recognised in 2020/21 with a corresponding transfer to the Government Grants Reserve to offset the recovery of the Collection Fund deficits by District Council's over the next three financial years. The Authority also received £1.390m of unbudgeted Covid-19 grant funding in 2020/21 and recognised an additional £199k to be paid to the Authority from the 2020/21 Covid-19 Fire Contingency Fund. In addition, two new grants were confirmed and recognised in 2020/21; a one-off Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) grant of £250k and; a one-off grant towards to cost of implementing the McCloud / Sargeant pensions remedy of £97k. Also, a business rates relief grant of £126k has been recognised, being the difference in the amount paid to the Authority based on estimates for 2020/21 and the estimated amount now due to the Authority based on the provisional outturn figures supplied by the District's. Other minor net differences total £3k.
- (m) **Investment income (£176k Reduced Income)** - At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bank of England base rate was quickly reduced to 0.1% meaning interest earned on balances invested has reduced considerably this year, resulting in a reduction against budgeted income of £133k. Although the reduction in income is significant, pro-active treasury management has increased the total amount of investment income received during the year. In addition, an accounting adjustment has been put through the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) to derecognise the fair value gains on treasury bills recognised in the CIES in 2019/20 (£43k), as the treasury bills were no longer held by the Authority as at 31 March 2021.
- (n) **Transfers to Reserves (£6.893m Increased Transfer to Reserves)** - The main reason for this increase relates to the additional grant funding recognised in 2020/21 (see (l)). Although the accounting treatment requires these grants to be recognised in 2020/21 the majority of the funding has not yet been received and is earmarked for use in future years so is offset by a transfer to the Government Grants Reserve. In addition, the amount drawn down from the Infrastructure Reserve was £402k less than budgeted (see **Appendix 5**), the amount drawn down from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve was £135k less than budgeted due to some temporary posts being funded from additional vacancy savings, and the amount transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve was higher than expected where committed expenditure has slipped to 2021/22.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2020/21 Revenue Budget - Functional Analysis

Figures shown are in £'000	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance to Budget
Firefighting and Rescue Services	31,308	30,936	-372
Control	2,012	1,869	-143
Total Operational Response	33,320	32,805	-515
Customer Safety	2,889	2,504	-385
Business Safety	2,438	2,165	-273
Total Customer and Business Safety	5,327	4,669	-658
Operational Policy and Resilience	3,539	3,510	-29
Total Operational Policy and Resilience	3,539	3,510	-29
Corporate Management Board and Business Support Team	2,169	1,893	-276
Member Allowances and Expenses	102	79	-23
Human Resources and Training	7,198	6,895	-303
Information Technology	5,640	5,245	-395
Property, Environment and Facilities	5,358	5,302	-56
Fleet and Transport	2,852	2,848	-4
Finance, Insurance and Procurement	2,239	2,421	182
Policy and Performance	1,034	1,015	-19
Engagement Team	759	795	36
Total Corporate Teams	27,351	26,493	-858
Pension Cost	1,889	2,141	252
Net Financing Costs	806	989	183
Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves	1,916	2,259	343
Non-Ring Fenced Grants	0	-1,560	-1,560
Admin for Council Tax Support	110	115	5
Total Pensions, Financing and Other Costs	4,721	3,944	-777
Net Budget	74,258	71,421	-2,837

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Significant Variances and Movements in the 2020/21 Revenue Budget

Functional Variance Analysis

The forecast net underspend of £2.837m 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

- (o) **Firefighting and Rescue Services (£372k Underspend)** - Activity related to Covid-19 has led to specific spend of £987k, which has been offset by covid grant funding, and other day-to-day pay budgets have underspent by £2.208m. This is in line with the detailed forecast position reported to Members in April 2021 and the explanations for this significant underspend remain broadly the same as those previously reported. At year-end an accounting adjustment has been entered to apportion the Government Grant for the increase in employer pension contributions across the relevant service headings, resulting in an overspend against this budget heading of £825k. Other minor net overspends total £24k.
- (p) **Control (£143k Underspend)** - The team has been operating with a small number of vacancies throughout this financial year. Although the number of vacancies increased at the start of 2021, five new members of staff joined the team in April 2021. The final pay underspend of £176k is offset by an additional spend of £33k against the budget for the shared control room arrangement with Kent Police.
- (q) **Customer Safety (£385k Underspend)** – The majority of this underspend relates to pay budgets (£301k), where vacancies have taken longer to fill due to Covid-19. The remaining underspend is mainly due to a reduced number of Safe and Well visits and Home Fire Safety visits during 2020/21 as a result of Covid-19 (£78k after £20k transfer to the Rolling Budget Reserve) (see (f)). Other minor net underspends total £6k.
- (r) **Business Safety (£273k Underspend)** - This underspend is mainly related to in-year vacancies within the Business Safety Team (£216k). In addition the Authority received an unbudgeted contribution towards a road casualty reduction post (£50k) and other minor net underspends total £7k.
- (s) **Corporate Management and Business Support Team (£276k underspend)** - Due to Covid-19 there were significant underspends on conference expenses, staff travel

costs and office printing totalling £117k. In addition the Collaboration budget underspent by £154k and other minor net underspends totalled £5k.

- (t) **Human Resources and Training (£303k Underspend)** - Pay budgets underspent by £476k, mainly as a result of vacancies within Corporate Teams apprentice posts and the Training team, of which some posts have been deleted from the establishment for 2021/22. There are additional underspends of £303k against Training expenditure (see (b)) and £96k on employee expenses budgets. These underspends are offset by reduced income drawn down from the apprenticeship levy of £117k, where less apprentices have been appointed to Corporate Teams than initially expected and wholtime recruits are no longer trained through the apprenticeship route, as well as the cost of membership and first year subscription to the Institute of Fire Engineers for operational staff (£93k) and other minor underspends totalling £37k. In addition, there are underspends that are partly offset by transfers to the Rolling Budget Reserve; to cover the costs of new gym equipment for stations (£165k); to provide assistance to support staff to return to work following absence due to injury (£50k) and for training courses which have been postponed until 2021/22 (£110k).
- (u) **Information Technology (£395k Underspend)** - see (g) for an explanation of the main reasons for this variance.
- (v) **Finance, Insurance and Procurement (£182k overspend)** - A post in the Finance team was filled in advance of the retirement of an experienced member of staff enabling the successful handover of duties, resulting in an overspend of £34k. In addition, there were several variances against insurance premiums, insurance excesses and provisions, which are adjusted each year-end following discussions with the Authority's insurers, totalling a net £148k.
- (w) **Pension Costs (£252k overspend)** - see (d) for an explanation of this variance.
- (x) **Net Financing Costs (£183k overspend)** - see (k) for an explanation of the main reasons for this variance.
- (y) **Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves (£343k Increased Transfer)** - This increased transfer to reserves relates to the variance reported against the Revenue Infrastructure Plan at **Appendix 5** (£214k) and a reduction in the requirement to fund some temporary posts from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve as they have now been funded from additional in-year vacancy savings (£129k).
- (z) **Non-Ring-Fenced Grants (£1.560m Additional Income)** - This additional income relates to unbudgeted government grants of; £1.589m towards Covid-19 costs, £155k business rates grants and; an £8k transparency code compliance grant. This is partly offset by a transfer of £192k to the Government Grants Reserve for Covid-19 grant accounted for in 2020/21 but unspent as at 31 March 2021.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2020/21 Infrastructure Outturn

Figures shown are in £'000	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance to Budget
Infrastructure Capital Budget			
Ashford Fire Station	190	45	-145
Total Station Development	190	45	-145
Generators			
	14	14	0
Roofing Works			
	80	80	0
Boilers			
	134	140	6
Total Premises	228	234	6
Mobile Data Terminals			
	51	44	-7
Total Information and Communication Systems	51	44	-7
Appliances			
	2,305	2,305	0
Specialist Units and Vehicles			
	287	245	-42
Cars and Vans			
	650	644	-6
Total Vehicles and Equipment	3,242	3,194	-48
Total Infrastructure Capital Budget	3,711	3,517	-194
Infrastructure Revenue Budget			
Premises	505	433	-72
Equipment	61	38	-23
Information and Comms. Systems	1,550	1,431	-119
Total Infrastructure Revenue Budget	2,116	1,902	-214
Total Infrastructure Revenue and Capital Budgets	5,827	5,419	-408
Funded from:-			
Base Revenue Contributions	3,792	3,792	0
Infrastructure Reserve	540	138	-402
One-off funding and grants	124	118	-6
Capital Receipts Reserve	1,371	1,371	0
Total Funding	5,827	5,419	-408

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
2020/21 Revenue and Capital Reserve Balances

Figures shown are in £'000		Opening Balance 01-Apr-20	Net Transfers 2020/21	Closing Balance 31-Mar-21
General Reserve	(A)	3,510	200	3,710
<i>Earmarked Reserves:</i>				
Government Grants	(B)	748	4,867	5,615
Infrastructure	(C)	26,183	862*	27,045
Insurance and Resource	(C)	1,748	1,837**	3,585
Rolling Budgets	(C)	370	704	1,074
Service Transformation and Productivity	(C)	850	52	902
Total Earmarked Reserves		29,899	8,322	38,221
Total Revenue Reserves		33,409	8,522	41,931
Capital Receipts	(D)	9,234	-1,359	7,875
Total Capital Reserves		9,234	-1,359	7,875
Total Usable Reserves		42,643	7,163	49,806

* Includes a transfer of £1m from the 2020/21 revenue budget underspend

** Includes transfer of £1.837m from the 2020/21 revenue budget underspend

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 (although the flexibility to use capital receipts to meet the revenue costs of transformation has been extended to April 2022)

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2020/21 Firefighters' Pension Fund

Figures shown are in £'000	Original Budget Estimate (Aug 2019)	Home Office Return (Aug 2020)	Outturn	Variance (Home Office Return)
Pensions Outgoings:				
Pension payments	23,269	23,558	23,648	90
Transfer values paid out	0	0	93	93
Total Expenditure	23,269	23,558	-23,741	183
Pension Income:				
Employee contributions	-3,665	-3,638	-3,703	-65
Employer contributions	-8,059	-8,206	-8,327	-121
In-year ill-health charge income	-306	-254	-351	-97
Income for pensions not abated	-73	-90	-278	-188
Transfer values received	0	0	-146	-146
Government top-up grant	-11,166	-11,370	-10,936	434
Total Income	-23,269	-23,558	-23,741	-183
Net Pension Fund Expenditure	0	0	0	0

2020/21 Top-up grant deficit £'000

Top-up grant requirement – 2020/21 outturn -10,936

Top-up grant received July 2020 (80% of August 2019 estimate) 8,933

Top-up grant deficit for 2020/21 -2,003

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By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021

Subject: INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Authority to maintain an adequate and effective Internal Audit process and as such this is provided by Kent County Council under a Service Level Agreement.

As part of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Head of Internal Audit is required to provide an annual opinion to Members on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's framework of governance, risk management and control. Their annual opinion is largely informed by work undertaken as part of the Internal Audit Plan for the 2020/21 financial year. The opinion also considers the results of audits for the previous two financial years, and the subsequent follow-up work undertaken.

Attached to this report is the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2020/21 for Members to review and the Head of Internal will be presenting this report at the Authority meeting. This report also forms part of a suite of reports on this agenda which Members are asked to consider prior to reviewing and agreeing the financial statements for the 2020/21 financial year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Consider and note the Annual Internal Audit report for 2020/21 (**Appendix 1** and paragraph 4 and 5 refers);
2. Consider and note the outcomes of the External Quality Assessment (EQA) of Internal Audit Services (**Appendix 1** and paragraph 6 refers).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Director, Finance and Corporate Services - Alison Kilpatrick
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext 8262
EMAIL: alison.kilpatrick@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Background

1. Section 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Authority to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its risk management, control and governance processes. The Authority discharges its Internal Audit function under a Service Level Agreement to Kent County Council (KCC). Annually the Head of Audit provides an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's Framework of Governance, Risk Management and Control. The annual opinion presented in this report is largely informed by work undertaken as part of the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 but also considers the subsequent follow-up work undertaken for audits of the previous two financial years.
2. The Head of Audit's opinion is one of the key independent means of assurance available to Members in discharging their role of overseeing the internal control processes implemented by officers and ensuring that a sound system of governance of the Authority's business is in place.
3. The assurance given on individual audits is at the time of issue of that report, but before full implementation of any agreed management action plan. The Authority maintains its own internal follow-up process for audits with assurance levels of "Adequate" and above which are then reviewed by Internal Audit and verified if necessary prior to being closed. Internal Audit however undertake full follow-up reviews for all 'limited' and 'no' assurance audits.

The Internal Audit Annual Report 2020/21

4. The Annual Report for 2020/21 is attached at **Appendix 1** for Members to review and consider. The Head of Internal Audit will present this report and their findings at the Authority meeting. In general the audits have followed the Plan agreed by Members in April 2020 however this has been an exceptional year due to Covid restrictions. This has proved to be a challenge for Internal Audit due to limited site access for field work and follow ups and limited Internal Audit resources. Internal Audit have been in continuous dialogue with Senior Management throughout this period to achieve the best and most effective approach to meet the plan but it has resulted in one audit (Collaboration) and two follow ups (Information Governance and Property Statutory compliance) being rescheduled to 2021/22 financial year.
5. There have been six audit reviews completed during the year, which have resulted in one high, four substantial and one adequate opinion. A further advisory audit was completed within the year (with an audit opinion that sufficient controls are in place). At the time of writing, however, the Contract Management Audit is still in draft report stage but is anticipated that it will be finalised in the coming weeks, thus enabling an opinion to be formulated by Internal Audit before the July Authority meeting. All audit

reviews have so far resulted in good or very good prospects for improvement and resulting action plans are detailed in the report for review. Members will therefore be pleased to note that the overall opinion for 2020/21 remains at 'Substantial' and KFRS have achieved 100% on all 5 key performance indicators for all audits completed.

Conformance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

6. The Public Sector Internal Audit standards are mandatory for the internal audit practice. They require Internal Audit to maintain a Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) which includes internal and external assessments of their compliance. An External Quality Assessment (EQA) of Internal Audit Services was completed in early 2021 by an independent assessor and the outcomes from the assessment are available to members for review in the Head of Internal Audit Report at **Appendix 1 (section 5)**. But in summary Internal received confirmation that they generally conform with all 52 elements of the Standard. There were areas of good practice highlighted but also a few suggested areas that could be enhanced.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7. A proportion of the 2020/21 budget has been reallocated to 2021/22 financial year to ensure provision for the remaining audit work can be completed after 31 March 2021. Otherwise sufficient resources are available to enable the programme of work to be delivered in 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8. Members are requested to:
 - 8.1 Consider and note the Annual Internal Audit report for 2020/21 (**Appendix 1** and paragraph 4 and 5 refers);
 - 8.2 Consider and note the outcomes of the External Quality Assessment (EQA) of Internal Audit Services (**Appendix 1** and paragraph 6 refers).

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Internal Audit Annual Report

2020/21

Date: 22 July 2021

Frankie Smith
Head of Internal Audit

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ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2020/21

1. Purpose and Background

- 1.1 The Annual Report provides a summary of the work completed by the Internal Audit service during 2020/21.
- 1.2 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) require that an annual report on the work of Internal Audit should be prepared and submitted to those charged with governance, to support the Authority's Annual Governance Statement (AGS), as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015. This report should include the following:
 - An annual opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk and control framework.
 - A summary of the audit work from which the opinion is derived.
 - Any issues which the Head of Internal Audit judges relevant to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.
 - A comparison of the work undertaken, with the work that was planned.
 - A summary of the performance of the Internal Audit function against its key performance indicators.
 - A statement of conformance with the PSIAS.
 - The outcomes from the Internal Audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP).
 - Disclosure of any qualifications to the opinion, with justifications.
 - Disclosure of any impairments or restrictions in scope.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to satisfy these requirements.

2. Annual Opinion

- 2.1 Internal Audit concludes that '**Substantial**' assurance can 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.
- 2.2 This opinion is derived from the evaluation of findings, conclusions and assurances from the work undertaken by Internal Audit during 2020/21 and the progress to implement agreed actions from previous audit reviews. Furthermore, our opinion acknowledges that there have been no instances of material internal or external fraud detected or reported during 2020/21.

- 2.3 There have been no limitations to the scope of Internal Audit work during 2020/21. However, it should be noted that the assurance expressed can never be absolute. Internal Audit provides 'reasonable' assurance based on the scope of the work performed and at the time of the audit.
- 2.4 The ability of Internal Audit to remain independent is fundamental to the robustness of the opinion provided. There has been no impairment to our audit work and reporting during 2020/21.
- 2.5 Members are reminded that they can contact Internal Audit directly for further information on any audit or to discuss any other matter. Contact details are given at the front of this report.

3. Summary of Internal Audit Work 2020/21

- 3.1 The 2020/21 Internal Audit Plan was agreed by Authority in April 2020. No subsequent amendments to the audit plan were made.
- 3.2 The 2020/21 Audit Plan included 8 audit reviews and one consultancy review. At the time of drafting this report, 6 audits and the consultancy review had been completed. A summary on the outcomes of the audit reviews are detailed in **Annex 1**.
- 3.3 The Contract Management audit is currently at draft report stage.
- 3.4 The Collaboration audit has been deferred to Q2 2021/22 in agreement with the Director of Finance, as the planned review of the current collaboration arrangements by the service had been delayed as much of the team's time during 2020/21 was diverted to support covid related activity.
- 3.5 **Table 1** summarises the outcomes from the 2020/21 Audit Plan:

Table 1 – Overview of 2020/21 Audit Plan			
Audit	Status	Assurance Opinion	Prospects for Improvement
Incident Command	Complete	Substantial	Very Good
Building Safety	Complete	High	Very Good
Contract Management		Draft Report	
Payroll	Complete	Substantial	Good
Customer	Complete	Substantial	Very Good
Sickness	Complete	Adequate	Good
Collaboration	Deferred	Audit deferred until Q2 2021/22	
Risk Management	Complete	Substantial	Very Good
BACS Payments	Complete	Advisory	

- 3.6 There were no fraud or irregularities identified, reported or investigated by Internal Audit during 2020/21.

- 3.7 **Table 2** provides a comparison of the Assurance Opinions and Prospects for Improvement allocated to audit reviews since 2018/19.

Table 2 – Comparison of Assurance Opinions and Prospects for Improvement since 2018/19			
	Audit	Assurance	Prospects for Improvement
2019/20	Information Governance	Substantial (Information Governance)	Good
		Limited (Physical Information Security)	
	Financial Strategies	High	Good
	Business Continuity Management	Substantial	Good
	Property Statutory Compliance	Limited	Good
	Operational Assurance	Substantial	Good
	Health and Safety	Adequate	Good
	EU Exit Lessons Learned	Substantial	N/A
	Fire Setters	Limited	Good
2018/19	Operational Training	Adequate	Good
	Crewing	Adequate	Good
	General Data Protection Regulations	Advisory	
	Disaster Recovery	Limited	Good
	Recruitment	Substantial	Good
	New Finance Systems	Substantial	Good
	Counter Fraud	Advisory	

4. Implementation of Agreed Actions

- 4.1 **Table 3** highlights the outcomes of all the agreed actions followed up during 2020/21:

Table 3 – Summary of Agreed Actions				
Audit	Audit Date	Assurance Opinion	Summary of Agreed Actions	Status
Building Safety	October 2020	High	(1) Low	Closed
Business Continuity	October 2019	Substantial	(2) Medium	Deferred to June 2021
Fire Setters	August 2019	Limited	(3) High (2) Medium	Closed
Health & Safety	May 2020	Adequate	(2) High (2) Medium	Closed
Information Governance	December 2019	Substantial / Limited	(1) High (2) Medium	Closed
Operational Assurance	October 2019	Substantial	(1) Medium	Closed
Operational Training	May 2019	Adequate	(7) Medium	Closed
Procurement & Contract Management	June 2018	Limited	(6) High (2) Medium	Closed
Property Statutory Compliance	March 2020	Limited	(3) High (4) Medium	Follow Up Complete. Two issues remain outstanding and will be subject to further follow up

- 4.2 The follow up reviews on the Business Continuity, Information Governance and Property Statutory Compliance audits were delayed due to Covid and site visit restrictions. However, these follow ups are now in progress.
- 4.3 Good progress is being made to implement agreed actions arising from audits. The overall response to implement all agreed actions due during 2020/21, by the original or revised implementation date is 100%

5. Conformance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (Standards)

- 5.1 All internal audit work completed during 2020/21 has been conducted in accordance with the Standards, our agreed Internal Audit Manual and Quality and Assurance Improvement Programme as required in Attribute Standard: **1300 – Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme**.
- 5.2 The Standards require all public sector internal audit functions to be externally assessed on a five-yearly basis, to assess conformance with the Standards. The purpose of the assessment was to review compliance with the 4 elements of the Code of Ethics and against 52 elements of the Standards to provide assurance to all stakeholders that the Internal Audit function is operating efficiently and effectively.
- 5.3 In February 2021, an independent assessor - Robin Pritchard (Business Risk Solutions) was appointed to complete the External Quality Assessment (EQA). The outcomes from the assessment can now be shared with Members.
- 5.4 The EQA assessed that the service is “...**Generally Conforms** with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards”, with all 52 elements generally conforming. This is the highest possible assessment available and reconciled with our own internal self-assessment, which was completed in advance of the EQA in January 2021.
- 5.5 A summary of the EQA assessments, by each Standard is provided below in **Table 4**:

Table 4 – Summary of EQA Assessments	
Standard	Level of Conformance
Mission Statement	Generally Conforms
Core Principles	Generally Conforms
Code of Ethics	Generally Conforms
Attribute Standard	
1000 Purpose, Authority and Responsibility	Generally Conforms
1100 Independence and Objectivity	Generally Conforms
1200 Proficiency and Due Professional Care	Generally Conforms
1300 Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme	Generally Conforms
Performance Standard	
2000 Managing the Internal Audit Activity	Generally Conforms
2100 Nature of Work	Generally Conforms
2200 Engagement Planning	Generally Conforms
2300 Performing the Engagement	Generally Conforms
2400 Communicating Results	Generally Conforms
2500 Monitoring Progress	Generally Conforms
2600 Communicating the Acceptance of Risk	Generally Conforms

- 5.6 The EQA report has recognised a number of areas of '**Good Practice**' and some issues have been raised for consideration regarding continuous improvement and good practice "... to reflect building on the existing considerable strengths in relation to resources, competency and delivery in order to enhance future service delivery."
- 5.7 The report included favourable benchmarking data and 93% positive responses to stakeholder feedback, including the following:
- 100% of stakeholders responded that *"Internal Audit considers the viewpoints of the organisation when planning and undertaking reviews and aims to provide a good balance between assurance and good practice with opportunities for improvement."*
 - 100% of stakeholders responded that *"The Internal Audit team provide a flexible and reliable service which adds value through the assurance audits and additional work it undertakes."*
 - 100% of stakeholders responded that *"Internal Audit makes you aware of any significant issues that occur during an audit on a timely basis, and you have the opportunity to respond or provide additional information."*
 - 90% responded that *"Internal Audit is customer focused and understands what the organisation is trying to achieve."*
- 5.8 The next stage of the EQA process is to address the recommendations and suggested enhancements identified in the EQA. Once prepared, the actions will be progressed, and periodic updates will be reported to Members. Some of the actions to be implemented are detailed below:
- A review of the Internal Audit Manual
 - Providing the team with risk based internal audit training
 - Review and update of the Internal Audit Charter
 - A review of the annual and engagement audit planning process to further embed risk-based auditing
 - A review of the internal audit definitions
 - To formalise arrangements to incorporate other sources of assurance when determining the annual audit opinion
 - Further development of the internal audit software (Pentana)
 - A review and update of audit templates

6. Internal Audit Performance

- 6.1 In April 2020 Members agreed the following performance indicators would be tracked and monitored throughout the year on all audit engagements completed. **Table 5** provides the year-end performance outturn against each indicator:

Table 5 – Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Performance Indicators			
	Indicator	Target	Actual
1.	Engagement Plan issued 2 weeks prior to commencement of fieldwork start date	90%	50%
2.	Verbal feedback to be provided within one week of completion of audit fieldwork	100%	50%
3.	Draft Reports to be issued by the date specified in the Engagement Plan	90%	50%
4.	Comments on Prospects for Improvement to be issued within 5 working days of receipt of Action Plan	90%	83%
5.	Final Report to be issued within 5 working days of receiving correspondence for Prospects for Improvement	90%	100%
6.	Client Satisfaction Questionnaires to be issued for all audits / investigations completed with the final report	100%	100%
7.	% Positive Client feedback	90%	100%
8.	% completion of Annual Internal Audit Plan @ 31 March 2021	90%	58%
KMFRA			
	Indicator	Target	Actual
1.	Agreement of Engagement Plan to be provided prior to fieldwork start date	100%	100%
2.	Response to Draft Report and Action Plan to be provided within 10 working days of issue	90%	100%
3.	Respond to comments on Prospects for Improvement assessment within 5 working days	90%	100%
4.	Client Satisfaction Questionnaires to be completed and returned within 10 working days of Final Report	100%	100%
5.	Actions plans in response to High and Medium Priority issues raised to be implemented within agreed timescales	90%	100%

6.2 Audit Plan delivery and performance during 2020/21 has been lower than expected. This can be contributed to the following factors:

- Work on the 2020/21 audit plan did not start until July 2020, when the current Head of Internal Audit joined the service.
- Requests received from clients to delay or defer audit reviews and follow ups to allow for service pressures and site visit restrictions caused by Covid-19.
- Two auditors have left the service since January 2021. A team restructure is currently underway, with some recruitment already completed and more planned during Q1 2021/22.

6.3 A more proactive and focused approach to audit plan delivery and performance for future audits years is being devised by the Head of Internal Audit, in consultation with the Internal Audit team and Director of Finance & Corporate Services (s151). This will provide the opportunity to optimise performance in future years and to identify factors which may help expedite the audit plan delivery within the agreed timescales.

6.4 There has been 100% implementation of agreed actions arising from issues raised during 2020/21 either by the originally agreed implementation date, or a subsequently agreed deferred date.

FS01-2021 Incident Command

Audit Opinion	Substantial
Prospects for Improvement	Very Good

Overall, Internal Audit found that KFRS have clear structures and frameworks in place to ensure that Incident Command are sufficiently prepared for incidents. Some areas for development have been identified however these are not considered to fundamentally impact on meeting the corporate objective of “responding effectively when needed”.

In alignment with National Operational Guidance (NOG), robust and consistently applied processes are used to identify individuals with potential to become Incident Commanders and assess their training and development needs. Training courses are Skills for Justice accredited with a balance of classroom learning, scenarios, and incident simulations. Courses are regularly reviewed, and quality checked by the training managers.

Detailed records are maintained of Incident Commanders qualified at each level and their qualification expiry dates and established processes are in place to ensure revalidation. Sufficient opportunity is provided for Incident Commanders to achieve their required Continuous Professional Development (CPD) hours through a mix of attendance at incidents, station based training and online scenarios. It was however identified that opportunities to gain experience through exposure to “real” incidents were found to vary.

A range of post incident activities are in use to facilitate capturing learnings from incidents. The Formal Debrief and Critical Incident Review Board processes have been reviewed as part of a previous audit and were found to be robust. Hot debriefs are undertaken at the closure of each incident, it was however identified that the format and subsequent recording of output from this activity varies and therefore assurance cannot be provided that all learnings from incidents considered to be standard or routine are being captured.

Internal Audit’s overall Audit Opinion of **Substantial** is based on the following Key Strengths and Areas for Development:

Key Strengths

- Talent Benchmarking is used to identify individuals with potential to become Incident Commanders with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) The Incident Command Skills (THINCs) system used to ensure consistency of assessment.
- Training courses are Skills for Justice Accredited and are regularly reviewed to ensure that training provided is of high quality and meets the needs of attendees.
- Initial and revalidation training courses contain relevant content, and the training meets the attendees needs.
- Work is being undertaken to continue to develop existing Fire Rescue Control Centre (FRCC) training and align this with the monthly station based NOG Scenario training undertaken by Incident Commanders.

- Positive feedback was received on the quality and timeliness of information provided by FRCC to crews whilst mobilising to an incident.
- Detailed training records are retained to enable identification of all Incident Commanders and their qualification expiry date.
- An established process is in operation to ensure that all Incident Commanders book onto revalidation courses prior to their qualification expiry date.
- There is good support from peers and more senior incident commanders during training and attendance at incidents.
- Procedural guidance documents are regularly reviewed, readily available to all Incident Commanders, and align with NOG guidance.
- The Formal Debrief and Critical Incident Review Board processes ensure that learnings from incidents identified as critical are captured and developed into agreed actions, these actions are then managed through to completion and closure by the Operational Assurance team.
- Collaboration with Kent Police and Secamb is good with these agencies working together under agreed principles. The route to request attendance through FRCC is understood.

Areas for Development

- Some Incident Commanders advised that the significant number of Operational Information Notes (OIN) and guidance documents and their length meant that the full content was difficult to remember. Internal Audit were advised that Incident Commanders are advised that the key requirement is that they are aware of the OIN's available and where to locate them rather than memorising the content and that action will be taken to reiterate this.
- Some Incident Commanders advised that their exposure to "real" incidents could be considered as limited. This varied depending on the Incident Commander level and whether they were Wholetime or On Call.
- Hot debriefs were well understood by Incident Commanders with all interviewed advising that this activity took place after every incident. It was however identified that the format of this was at times inconsistent and often did not result in feedback being submitted.

Prospects for Improvement

Our overall opinion of **Very Good** for Prospects for Improvement is based on the following factors:

- Audit findings have been accepted by Assistant Director Operational response and Director Operations.
- Detailed management action plans have been developed in response to the issues raised with appropriate owners and timescales for implementation. Action plans include a range of activities, some which can be implemented with immediate effect to mitigate risks identified whilst other longer-term solutions are finalised.

Summary of management responses

Risk Rating	Number of Issues	Action Plan	Risk Accepted
High Risk	0	0	N/A
Medium Risk	2	2	N/A
Low Risk	0	0	N/A

FS02-2021 Building Safety

Audit Opinion	High
Prospects for Improvement	Very Good

Rationale

The current Risk Based Inspection Policy places a clear focus on using a consistent approach to identifying the highest risk buildings across Kent and Medway and ensuring that Fire Safety Inspections are undertaken in those premises at least every 3 years. The Risk Based Inspection Plan was adapted during the Covid-19 lockdown period to enable Building Safety to continue to provide advice and undertake inspections thus continuing to meet the requirements placed upon them to ensure compliance with the Fire Safety Order 2005.

The purpose of this audit review was therefore to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure an effective and efficient delivery of this requirement, whilst complying with all the relevant statutory legislation.

Internal Audit's overall Audit Opinion of **High** is based on the following Key Strengths and Areas for Development:

Key Strengths

- The Risk Based Inspection Policy ensures compliance with the Fire Safety Order 2005.
- Building Safety have appropriately designated the highest proportion of their available resources to undertaking pre-planned and re-active audits at high-risk premises.
- A robust process using a combination of Experian Data and other sources of intelligence is used to identify the highest risk premises for inspection.
- During Covid-19, the Risk Based Inspection Programme was adapted appropriately.
- The audit process is comprehensive in design, the relevant articles within the Fire Safety Order 2005 are included within the supporting documentation.
- Premises inspection visits are assigned to inspectors with appropriate signatory status and experience.
- Review of a sample of completed audits found that the inspection process had been consistently followed with appropriate records of the visit.
- Quality Assurance (QA) processes are systematic, robust, and sufficiently documented.
- The Enforcement process is well documented and there is appropriate oversight by the Enforcement Manager.
- Comprehensive records are retained of Enforcement and Prohibition notices served and appropriate monitoring undertaken.
- Information is shared between Building safety and Operation Crews. Building safety are also part the Integrated Learning Assurance Model (ILAM) initiative which brings together expertise and information from teams across KFRS.

Areas for Development

- Co-ordinators offer additional intelligence to support managers in the development of the Risk Based Inspection Programme however the guidance documents to support this process are currently in draft form and have not been published. Internal Audit were advised that a management decision was made not to publish the draft guidance documents as they are subject to frequent review and updates as part of the project to implement the new Dynamics system (Starting in October 2020 and completing in April 2021).
- During review of the Covid-19 risk-based inspection programme for each of the four areas, it was identified that there were inconsistencies. However, through interviews with key officers it was established that this is a temporary situation during COVID-19 Lock down 1.
- KFRS have not produced their own guidance for inspectors regarding how to use all information available to determine whether a follow-up visit is necessary. It is noted that the decision to undertake a follow up is mainly determined by the scoring calculation built into the Premises Risk Management (PRM) system which is based on National Guidance.

Prospects for Improvement

Our overall opinion of **Very Good** for Prospects for Improvement is based on the following factors:

- The one low risk issue identified has been confirmed as being of a temporary nature due to managers in each area being encouraged to use local knowledge when developing a risk-based inspection programme for use during Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.
- Management have accepted points raised in areas for development and confirmed that it is proposed that guidance is developed to align with processes as the new Dynamics system is implemented.

Summary of management responses

Risk Rating	Number of Issues	Action Plan	Risk Accepted
High Risk	0	N/A	N/A
Medium Risk	0	N/A	N/A
Low Risk	1	1	N/A

FS04-2021 Payroll

Audit Opinion	Substantial
Prospects for Improvement	Good

Rationale

The audit examined the controls operating within the Payroll process for processing staff starters and leavers.

There are a number of areas identified where controls are operating effectively. All KFRS staff starters and leavers sampled had been accurately and promptly set up or removed on HR Systems. Overall, the processes involved are operating effectively, with only a few minor exceptions identified. The HR and Payroll team have adapted to new ways of working due to the Covid pandemic in which testing found there to have been minimal impact on the continuity of the service.

Our audit opinion of **Substantial** is based on the following key strengths and areas for development:

Key Strengths

- Overall starters and leavers records are maintained, although some minor exceptions were identified (see Areas for Development below).
- New employees within our sample had been appropriately authorised prior to commencing employment.
- Starters and leavers reviewed found that in each instance they had been processed promptly and accurately upon notification being received.
- Buddy checks have been established for new starters though testing found a small proportion of those within our sample did not have evidence of checks taking place (see areas for development).
- Adequate segregation of duties are in place between recruitment and payroll.
- Testing found that leavers within our sample had not been paid after their termination date.
- Appropriate authorisation had been received in each instance sampled prior to Staff leavers being removed from the payroll system.
- Calculations in calculating final pay in our sample was accurate.

Areas of Development

- Internal Audit were unable to evidence that procedures used for starters and leavers had been reviewed for appropriateness and completeness. **Issue 1**
- 3 out of 30 leaver files reviewed did not contain evidence of being buddy checked however, in each instance they had been input to the system correctly. **Issue 2**

Prospects for Improvement

Our overall opinion of **Good** for Prospects for Improvement is based on the following factors:

- The HR team had positive engagement with audit.
- Continuity of the service has not been affected due to the covid pandemic.

Summary of management responses

Risk Rating	Number of Issues	Action Plan	Risk Accepted
High Risk	0	0	N/A
Medium Risk	0	0	N/A
Low Risk	2	2	N/A

FS05-2021 Customer

Audit Opinion	Substantial
Prospects for Improvement	Very Good

Rationale

The review undertaken was to establish that KFRS's Customer and Corporate Plan, key objectives, and underpinning core activities and values relating to "Customer" are well understood across the organisation. All departments involved in the audit process demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of "who" their customers are, both internal and external. Internal Audit have however, identified inconsistencies between departments regarding the amount, and type of feedback and performance monitoring activities being undertaken and whether any customer focused training has been provided to staff. The service should also consider how communications to staff are managed and coordinated to ensure that any risk of conflicting messages is mitigated.

Internal Audit's overall Audit Opinion of **Substantial** is based on the following Key Strengths and Areas for Development:

Key Strengths

- KFRS have recently run Institute of Customer Service (ICS) and ServiceMark surveys to obtain views of the service from both external customers and staff. Results from both surveys have been presented to Corporate Management Board and Members, with action plans developed based on the findings. Responses from the external survey were particularly positive.
- A Customer Experience Team has been set up to manage the customer experience and a Customer Experience Plan has been developed for roll out in 2021 which aligns with the service's plans to apply for ICS Service Mark Accreditation.
- All departments involved in the audit process demonstrated strong awareness and understanding of the Customer and Corporate Plan with many advising that their individual team strategies had been developed with consideration of how they link to the corporate plan.
- A customer centric culture is becoming established within the service with this ethos embedded at the top of KFRS and being cascaded downwards throughout the organisation. Colleagues at all levels are encouraged to share best practice and contribute their own thoughts and ideas of how to provide the best service to customers.
- Departments were able to identify their customers accurately (both internal and external) and provided adequate explanations of how their activities were prioritised to meet the needs of customers.
- All departments provide a variety of ways for their customers to contact them with some best practice points identified such as the use of centralised "team" telephone numbers or email addresses and trackers used to ensure that all enquiries are dealt with.
- Departments have self-identified areas where they can make improvements to their customer experience and are including these areas in their own 5-year strategic plans.

- The need to request, analyse and act on feedback is well understood with some departments demonstrating good examples of how feedback is obtained and subsequently acted upon.

Areas for Development

- The message to “focus on the customer” is well understood across all departments. However, many departments advised that no specific customer related training has been provided to them in the last 12 months and therefore they are unsure of the ways in which they can identify the needs of their customers and subsequently reflect those needs in the activities being undertaken.
- There is scope for some departments to improve their approach to requesting and analysing feedback to facilitate further improvements in meeting the needs of their customers including requesting feedback internally as well as externally.
- Feedback received from customers is not consistently analysed for themes and trends and is not consistently stored in a manner which would facilitate further review at a later date.

Prospects for Improvement

Our overall opinion of **Very Good** for Prospects for Improvement is based on the following factors:

- Departments have been able to recognise where improvements could be made to enhance the customer experience and are including plans to address within their 4-year strategic plans.

Summary of management responses

Risk Rating	Number of Issues	Action Plan	Risk Accepted
High Risk	0	0	N/A
Medium Risk	1	1	N/A
Low Risk	1	1	N/A

FS06-2021 Sickness

Audit Opinion	Adequate
Prospects for Improvement	Good

Rationale

The aim of the audit was to provide assurance that the Service effectively manages short and long-term sickness absence. This included a review of the processes for sickness absence relating to Covid-19.

Internal Audit's overall Audit Opinion of Adequate is based on the following Key Strengths and Areas for Development:

Key Strengths

- The Service's commitment to sickness management is outlined within the People Plan, as part of a sickness and wellbeing objective.
- A dedicated 'Absence Inbox' is in place for the notification of sickness absence. HR provides oversight of this inbox to ensure correct input to i-Trent.
- Specific Covid-19 policies and procedures are in place, including a dedicated 'Covid Cell' of staff to provide oversight of Covid sickness cases and data.
- For the period since the go live of the Covid Cell on 15th January 2021, to 28th February 2021, it was found that the Covid SharePoint list and the i-Trent records reconciled.
- HR Business Partners provide sickness management oversight and support.
- A Corporate Attendance Review Board is in place to discuss specific absence cases and seek suitable solutions to complex cases.
- Monthly statistics on sickness are compiled by the Business Intelligence Team and reported to management.
- Covid sickness rates are regularly reported to the National Fire Chiefs Charity (NFCC).
- Sickness rates are reported to all Fire and Rescue Authority meetings.

Areas for Development

- The current Supporting Attendance at Work Policy needs to be reviewed, as per the findings of the external consultant's review.
- Training is needed to support sickness processes and the importance of accurate recording of absence, as per the findings of the external consultant's review.
- Open sickness absences not being closed upon the staff member's return to work, which can cause inaccuracies within i-Trent data for pay.
- Issues have been identified with sickness being retrospectively amended within the Kronos rostering system.
- A review of sickness absences recorded within i-Trent found 13 cases with no absence reason recorded.
- A review between i-Trent and the Covid-19 records held within SharePoint identified 21 instances of sickness that did not reconcile, all from December 2020 or January 2021.

Prospects for Improvement

Our overall opinion of **Good** for Prospects for Improvement is based on the following factors:

- Throughout this review staff have displayed high levels of transparency and openness in relation to the areas for development and commitment towards finding solutions to address issues identified.

Prospects for Improvement have not been placed as Very Good, given the time that has passed since the external consultant's review in February 2020 and the lack of progress made. Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has delayed actions, more than a year has now passed so greater progress would be expected.

Summary of management responses

Risk Rating	Number of Issues	Action Plan	Risk Accepted
High Risk	0	0	N/A
Medium Risk	3	3	N/A
Low Risk	3	3	N/A

FS08-2021 Risk Management

Audit Opinion	Substantial
Prospects for Improvement	Very Good

Rationale

The purpose of this review was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's strategic and operational Risk Management arrangements.

The audit has established that the Authority has mature and effective strategic and operational risk management arrangements in place. The main findings from the review are detailed below:

Strengths

- The Authority has an up-to-date Risk Management Strategy and guidance notes in place, which are easily accessible to all officers via SharePoint, which officers involved in the review demonstrated a good awareness of.
- Responsibility for strategic and operational risk management has been clearly defined, including the allocation of risks and associated actions to designated risk owners.
- There is a proactive risk management culture in place across the whole Authority, including service areas working collaboratively to review risks and identify and manage newly emerging risks.
- There is a formal process in place for risk identification, assessment, treatment, monitoring / review and reporting.
- Risk management templates are available, and risk management records are held centrally.
- The corporate risk register is the subject of at least quarterly reviews and regular reporting to Corporate Management Board (CMB) and twice yearly to the Authority.
- Divisional and project risk registers are maintained, subject to regular review and reporting to the respective Board.
- Risks are widely considered as part of decision making, policy development and project management.

Area for Development

- Officers interviewed during the audit had a sound understanding of the Authority's Risk Management strategy and procedures. However, some refresher risk management training, including risk appetite, for officers and new starters would be beneficial.

Prospects for Improvement

Our overall opinion of **Very Good** for Prospects for Improvement is based on the fact that risk management training will be delivered to Members and Officers by 31 March 2022.

Summary of management responses:

Risk Rating	Number of Issues	Action Plan	Risk Accepted
High Risk	0	0	N/A
Medium Risk	0	0	N/A
Low Risk	1	1	N/A

Background

The Finance Manager at KFRS requested that Internal Audit undertake an independent review of the new BACS system, which was introduced on 1st September 2020.

Scope

It was agreed this review would include the following:

- a) Examination of procedure notes.
- b) Examination of users that have been granted access to the system and their roles to ensure that there is separation of duties.
- c) Sample testing of BACS payment run to ensure that the appropriate processes had been followed, appropriate authorisation given, and evidence retained.

Conclusion

The current BACS payment procedures are clearly documented and followed in practice. Systems users and access rights align with the scheme of delegation and allow sufficient separation of duties.

Definition of Audit Assurance Levels

High	Internal control, Governance and the management of risk are at a high standard. The arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal controls are extremely well designed and applied effectively. Processes are robust and well-established. There is a sound system of control operating effectively and consistently applied to achieve service/system objectives. There are examples of best practice. No significant weaknesses have been identified.
Substantial	Internal Control, Governance and management of risk are sound overall. The arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal controls are largely suitably designed and applied effectively. Whilst there is a largely sound system of controls there are few matters requiring attention. These do not have a significant impact on residual risk exposure but need to be addressed within a reasonable timescale.
Adequate	Internal control, Governance and management of risk is adequate overall however, there were areas of concern identified where elements of residual risk or weakness with some of the controls may put some of the system objectives at risk. There are some significant matters that require management attention with moderate impact on residual risk exposure until resolved.
Limited	Internal Control, Governance and the management of risk are inadequate and result in an unacceptable level of residual risk. Effective controls are not in place to meet all the system/service objectives and/or controls are not being consistently applied. Certain weaknesses require immediate management attention as there is a high risk that objectives are not achieved.
No Assurance	Internal Control, Governance and management of risk is poor. For many risk areas there are significant gaps in the procedures and controls. Due to the absence of effective controls and procedures no reliance can be placed on their operation. Immediate action is required to address the whole control framework before serious issues are realised in this area with high impact on residual risk exposure until resolved.

Definition of Risk Ratings

High	There is a gap in the control framework or a failure of existing internal controls that results in a significant risk that service or system objectives will not be achieved.
Medium	There are weaknesses in internal control arrangements which lead to a moderate risk of non-achievement of service or system objectives.
Low	There is scope to improve the quality and/or efficiency of the control framework, although the risk to overall service or system objectives is low.

Definition of Prospects for Improvement

Very Good	There are strong building blocks in place for future improvement with clear leadership, direction of travel and capacity. External factors, where relevant, support achievement of objectives.
Good	There are satisfactory building blocks in place for future improvement with reasonable leadership, direction of travel and capacity in place. External factors, where relevant, do not impede achievement of objectives.
Adequate	Building blocks for future improvement could be enhanced, with areas for improvement identified in leadership, direction of travel and/or capacity. External factors, where relevant, may not support achievement of objectives.
Uncertain	Building blocks for future improvement are unclear, with concerns identified during the audit around leadership, direction of travel and/or capacity. External factors, where relevant, impede achievement of objectives.

By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021
Subject: TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

The Authority is required by the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual review of treasury management activities and the estimated and actual prudential and treasury indicators for the year. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

The Authority continued to prioritise security and liquidity over potential yield in line with CIPFA guidance. Interest rates saw a significant drop during the year with the Authority receiving total investment income of £103k for the year on an average cash balance of £50.1m.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the year-end report on Treasury Management activity for 2020/21.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Finance Manager - Nicola Walker
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext. 6122
EMAIL: Nicola.walker@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS:

COMMENTS

Introduction

1. The Authority approved the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2020/21 at its meeting on 14 February 2020 (Minute 35) and received a mid-year update at its meeting on 15 October 2020 (Minute 24). This report reviews the main aspects of the Authority's Treasury Management activity during 2020/21, as required by the Local Government Act 2003 and the CIPFA Code on Treasury Management and Capital Finance.
2. The regulatory environment places a responsibility on Members for the review and scrutiny of the Treasury Management Policy and related activities. This report, is therefore, important in providing details of the 2020/21 outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Authority's policies previously approved by Members.

Annual Treasury Management Review 2020/21

3. **Economy and Interest rates** - On 19 March 2020, the bank rate was cut to the historically low level of 0.1% and remained at this level throughout 2020/21. The pandemic has undoubtedly had a significant impact on finances and the economy over the last 18 months. The Bank of England and the Government have introduced new programmes of supplying the banking system with a significant amount of cheap credit so that banks could help cash-starved businesses to survive the lockdown. Additionally, substantial financial support (grants) has been provided across the public sector, to help them support the local community in a variety of ways. This meant that for most of the year there was much more liquidity in financial markets than there was demand to borrow. Consequently, investment returns were very low during the year as a number of banks and institutions reduced the interest rates paid on deposits as they had no demand for new financial deposits.
4. **Treasury Position as at 31 March 2021** - The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) at 31 March 2021 is the net amount of capital expenditure not yet fully funded. The difference between the CFR and the amount of outstanding loans is the element of capital expenditure being temporarily funded from internal cash balances (under-borrowing). **Table 1** shows this for the current year in comparison to the previous year.

Table 1 – Treasury Position Compared to Previous Year

	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-21
	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	3,767	2,798
External PWLB Borrowing	-2,125	-1,425
Internal Borrowing (Under-borrowing)	1,642	1,373
Total Deposits	43,801	48,071
Less PWLB Borrowing	-2,125	-1,425
Net Deposits	41,676	46,646

5. **Strategy for 2020/21** - The Investment Strategy for 2020/21 initially saw no change from the 2019/20 Strategy. However, a mid-year review was undertaken and subsequently amendments to the Strategy were agreed at the December Authority meeting. This included limiting investments in Money Market funds to £5m per fund up to a maximum limit of £15m and with regard to Local Authority lending, an individual value of £5m per authority with a maximum limit of £15m of the Authority's cash balance to be invested, was also agreed. Counterparty limits were also increased with HSBC bank and Santander from £5m to £7m to take advantage of the more favourable rates available. In order to be able to respond to the changing markets the mid-year review also proposed increasing the percentage of funds deposited in the market on a variable basis, from 50% to 100%.
6. The Authority deposits cash balances in a number of different bank deposits and call accounts and also makes use of the Debt Management Office Treasury Bills. This provides a spread of risk across the accounts and enables the Authority to make best use of the available rates whilst still prioritising Security, Liquidity and Yield. Treasury Bills at the start of the year had an average interest rate of 0.65% and later returned a negative interest rate towards the end of the year. As such, in order to ensure the maximisation of interest earned whilst still maintaining security and liquidity, the Authority began investing in Money Market Funds and lending to other Local Authorities. As well as investing in Money Market Funds, a new account was opened with the Coventry Building Society and the Treasury team continue to meet with our Bank Relationship Managers to identify new products and available rates.
7. **Borrowing in 2020/21** - The 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy stated that “no new borrowing is planned”, and that was indeed the case for 2020/21.
8. **Borrowing outturn for 2020/21** - During 2020/21 the Authority repaid one loan of £700k which had an interest rate of 5.05%. The balance of outstanding loans at 31 March 2021 was £1,425k. **Table 2** below details the maturity structure of the

remaining loans held by the Authority as at 31 March 2021, all of which are provided by the PWLB at a fixed rate interest.

Table 2 – Maturity Structure of Remaining Loan Portfolio

	31-Mar-21 £'000
Less than one year	424
Between one and two years	300
Between two and five years	701
Total	1,425

9. **Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream** - This indicator shows the impact of the capital plans on the Authority's overall finances (borrowing costs net of investment income), as shown in **Table 3**. **Table 4** details how the net borrowing figure is calculated.

Table 3 – Borrowing Costs net of Investment Income

	2020/21 Outturn £'000
Net Revenue	71,421
Net Borrowing *see Table 4 below for calculation	946
Ratio	1.32%

Table 4 – Calculation of Net Borrowing Figure

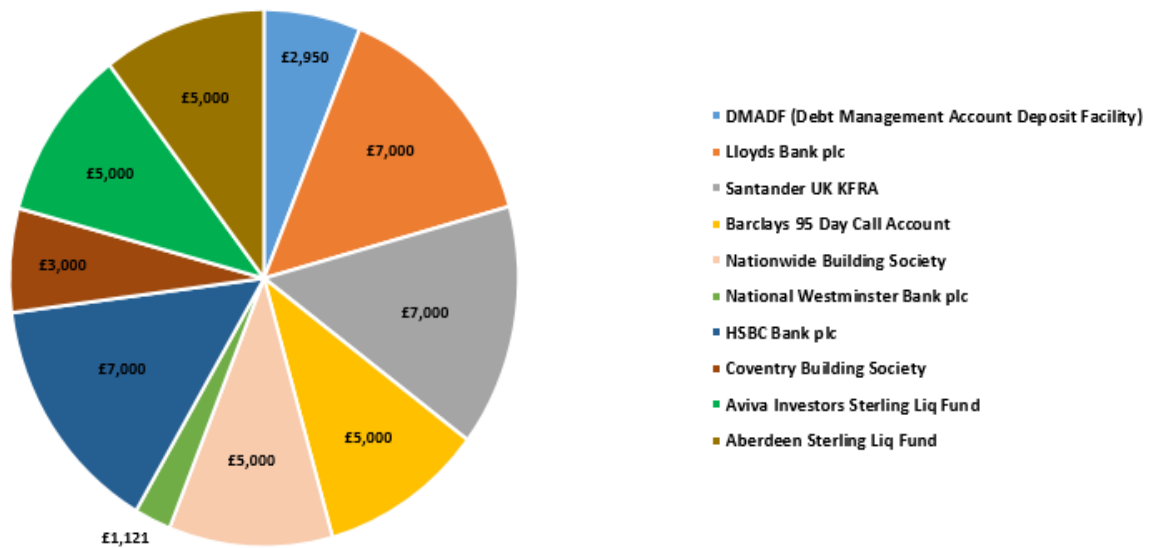
	2020/21 Outturn £'000
Minimum Revenue Provision and Voluntary Revenue Provision*	969
Interest paid for borrowing	80
Interest and Investment Income	-103
Net Borrowing	946

* The provision made by the Authority to finance its CFR.

10. **Investment Rates in 2020/21** – The Authority maintained an average cash balance of £50.1m and earned an average rate of return of 0.21%. **Graph 1** below shows the cash invested per counterparty at 31 March 2021 whilst **Graph 2** shows the average interest rate per counterparty at 31 March 2021.

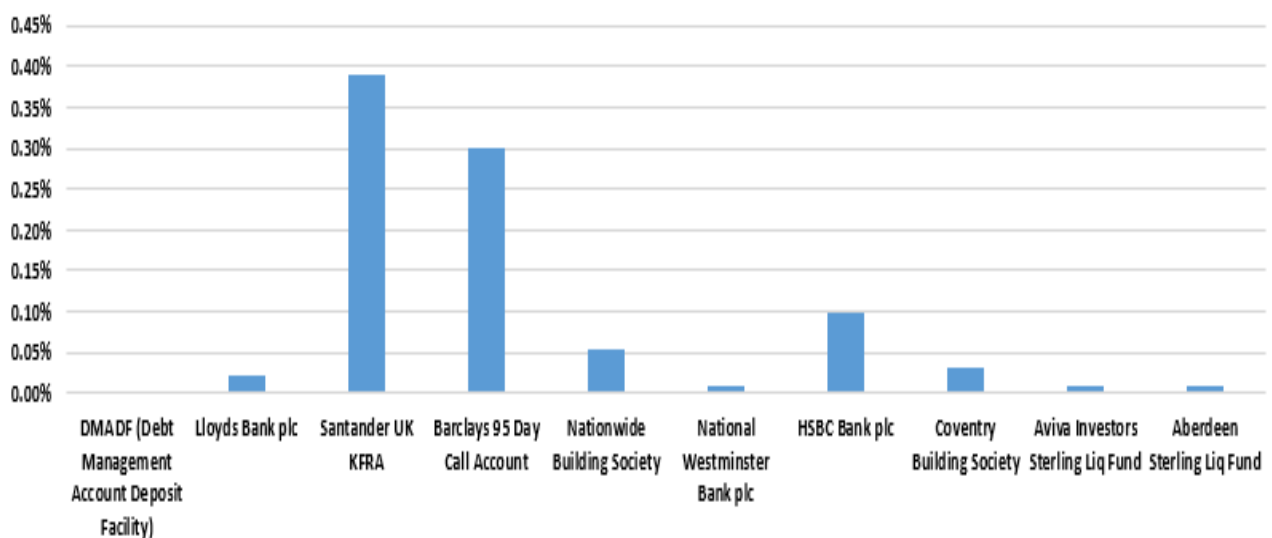
Graph 1

Cash Invested Per Counterparty as at March 21 (£000's)



Graph 2

Average Interest Rate Per Counterparty as at March 2021



11. **Prudential and Treasury Indicators** - The Table in **Appendix 1** shows the original Prudential and Treasury indicators for 2020/21 together with the actuals for 2019/20 and 2020/21. There were no breaches of limits in 2020/21.
12. **MIFID II Regulations** - These regulations govern the relationship that financial institutions conducting lending and borrowing transactions have with local authorities from 2018. Members will recall that the Authority 'opted up' to become a professional client in order to ensure that it continued to receive the same level of advice on investments and borrowing, and access to the same instruments. There have been no changes with regard to the management and administration of the Authority's Treasury Function that require notification to the financial institutions during this financial year.
13. **Treasury Management Training** - The Treasury Code of Practice states that authorities should ensure that the appropriate level of training is delivered to both Members and staff who are involved in the delivery and scrutiny of the treasury management function. Members received a presentation from Link Asset Services, the Authority's Treasury Advisor at the October 2018 Authority meeting and the new Audit and Governance members are due to undertake treasury training at their November 2021 meeting provided by Link Asset Services. Officers within the Finance team with direct responsibility, regularly attend seminars and conferences to ensure specialist Treasury and Investment knowledge is kept up to date. Currently 5 members of the Finance Team are undertaking CIPFA E-learning modules related to Treasury Management to continue their professional development.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

14. All financial implications associated with servicing the Treasury Management functions are able to be contained within the overall budget.

RECOMMENDATION

15. Members are requested to:
 - 15.1 Approve the year-end report on Treasury Management activity for 2020/21.

Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators

	2019/20 Outturn	2020/21 Original Forecast	2020/21 Outturn
Prudential Indicators for affordability, prudence and capital expenditure			
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Expenditure	70,293	74,258	71,421
Revenue Provision for debt repayment	969	969	969
Capital expenditure	1,729	8,664	3,517
CFR as at 31 March	3,767	2,798	2,798
Total loans outstanding as at 31 March	2,125	1,425	1,425
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	1.07%	0.97%	1.32%
Treasury Indicators			
Assumed Operational Boundary for external debt	18,000	18,000	18,000
Assumed Authorised Limit for external debt	20,000	22,000	22,000
Interest rate exposure for borrowing at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%
Interest rate exposure for borrowing at variable rates	20%	20%	20%
Interest rate exposure for investing at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%
Interest rate exposure for investing at variable rates	50%	50%	100%

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By: Assistant Director, Corporate Services
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021
Subject: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report seeks Members' approval to the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement, incorporating the Operational Assurance Statement. The preparation of this followed the completion of the annual internal self-assessment process.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21, which includes the Operational Assurance Statement (paragraphs 5,6,10 and **Appendix 1** refer).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Inspection and Governance Officer - Owain Thompson
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext 6374
EMAIL: owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Background

1. Corporate Governance is defined as “the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities” and the requirement to ensure good governance is enshrined in regulation. Section 3 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 requires the Authority to ensure it has a sound system of control to facilitate the effective management of its functions, to manage its finances and manage risks. Section 6 of the regulations stipulates the need to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and, following consideration of the review by Members, to approve an Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Governance Statement is intended to provide an analysis of the Authority’s governance arrangements and an assessment of their effectiveness and the level of compliance with them. In line with the regulations the draft Annual Governance Statement was published in late May on the Authority’s website alongside the draft (pre-audited) set of accounts. Following its formal approval by Members, the final Annual Governance Statement will be published alongside the final approved annual accounts for the 2020/21 financial year.
2. Following the publication of updated guidance by CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy), in July 2020 the Authority published a revised Code of Corporate Governance (this was presented to Members at the Authority meeting on 23 July 2020). 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 is cross-referenced to the Annual Governance Statement.
3. The content of the Annual Governance Statement is set out in the statutory guidance and should include details of the procedures in place throughout the last financial year, and an assessment of the extent to which they are felt to be operating effectively in ensuring compliance with the Code and delivering good governance across the Authority. The Authority is also required to produce an Operational Assurance Statement detailing the progress that is being made in meeting the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services. The Operational Assurance Statement is incorporated into the Annual Governance Statement (please refer to paragraphs 5, 6 and 10 below for further information about this).
4. The Authority has responsibility for ensuring that officers have designed and implemented appropriate systems and processes to manage the Authority effectively and for obtaining assurance that these operate effectively. This role is discharged in a number of ways. Regular reports are submitted to Members seeking approval to any new or updated key policies and controls. Performance in effective compliance of these policies or controls is also reported to Members, ranging from regular reports on financial issues and service delivery performance to details of complaints and

commendations received. Members also receive reports from the External Auditor and the Head of Internal Audit containing independent assessments of the operation of some of these controls. The main means of providing Members with the necessary assurance however, is through the annual self-assessment undertaken by officers, which is used to develop the Annual Governance Statement.

5. **Operational Assurance Statement** – In 2012, the Government issued additional guidance setting out how fire and rescue authorities should extend their Annual Governance Statement to include an operational assessment of progress in meeting the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services. It is this operational assessment that is outlined in the Operational Assurance Statement. In order to simplify this process, the Annual Governance Statement and the Operational Assurance Statement are published as a single document on the Authority's website, thus providing Members and the wider audience, which includes the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), with a single comprehensive assurance statement.
6. In 2017, the Home Office announced that as part of the fire reform programme, a review would be undertaken of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services. Following a period of public consultation which ran from December 2017 to February 2018, the current National Framework came into effect on 1 June 2018. The revised framework reflects the provisions in the Policing and Crime Act 2017 on emergency services collaboration and changes to fire and rescue authority governance. The Operational Assurance Statement reflects the revised National Framework. The National Framework is organised around the following seven sections:
 - Section 1. Outline of the priorities for all FRAs in England
 - Section 2. Delivery of functions
 - Section 3. National Resilience
 - Section 4. Governance
 - Section 5. Achieving value for money
 - Section 6. Workforce
 - Section 7. Inspection, intervention and accountability
7. Due to the similarity in names, in order to avoid confusion with the Authority's Operational Assurance Team, for the next financial year (2022/23) the Operational Assurance Statement will be renamed the 'Statement of Assurance'. This change will also bring the Authority in line with the terminology used by the majority of fire and rescue authorities.

Style and Content of the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement

8. Following a narrative detailing the regulatory elements, the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement provides a short commentary on each of the six governance frameworks (Financial Management, Service Delivery, Democratic Framework, Information Management, Performance Management, and Human Resources) and lists any changes made over the past year, together with planned changes for the coming year. The sources of assurance used to arrive at the overall assurance level for the whole governance framework are then listed. These provide evidence as to how the Authority's governance processes deliver successful outcomes and meet the requirements of the published Code.
9. Following issues over the past few years with financial management and corporate governance in some local authorities, CIPFA reviewed its guidance and issued the 'Financial Management Code' (this was brought to Members' attention at the February 2021 meeting of the Authority). This mandatory Code provides guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities. The intention is that by complying with the principles and standards within the Code, local authorities will be able to demonstrate their financial sustainability by embedding enhanced standards of financial management. The Code came into effect from 1 April 2020, with the initial 12 months operating as a 'shadow year'. This was done in order to give local authorities time to prepare for the full implementation deadline of 31 March 2021. As per the requirements set out by CIPFA, the Annual Governance Statement includes an assessment of the Authority's compliance with the principles of the Code.
10. In early 2021, CIPFA issued guidance stating that when local government bodies are preparing their annual governance statements they should also make specific comment about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on governance arrangements. This stems from a recognition by CIPFA that, as a result of the pandemic, many organisations will have experienced changes to their ways of working and adapted their governance arrangements accordingly. In addition to identifying any areas where significant changes have been made, the annual governance statement should also be clear about whether the governance arrangements remain fit for purpose. As a result of this requirement, the Annual Governance Statement contains an assessment of this.
11. **Operational Assurance Statement** – The purpose of the Operational Assurance Statement is somewhat different in that it is designed to provide the Government with evidence that the Authority is meeting the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services (refer to paragraphs 5 and 6). However, the National Framework is an extensive document covering a wide range of activities, meaning a longer narrative to provide the assurance is required. The Operational Assurance Statement lists the various requirements, and evidences the Authority's activities and performance against each of these.

12. The self-assessment process for the Annual Governance Statement focuses on a relatively small number of top level key controls that ensure that the principles of good governance set out in the guidance and enshrined in the Code are followed. The operation of each individual control is assessed for effectiveness and compliance, providing a view as to whether the control is suitable and adequate for the risks it is designed to counter.
13. Each governance framework is reviewed by the senior manager responsible for its design and operation and those charged with undertaking the assessment. A process has been developed to record these assessments and to identify any indicators that are used to monitor performance. These are then collated and reviewed and used to develop the Annual Governance Statement. The assessments are then reviewed and any anomalies discussed and corrected. Where available, external, independent sources of assurance, such as Internal and External Audit reports, HMICFRS inspector reports, and awards and recognition schemes, are considered to supplement the self-assessment. Once completed, an overall assessment rating is made.
14. The overall level of assurance is assessed against a five tier rating which runs from red to green. The criteria that inform this rating are drawn from, and are consistent with, the definitions in the assurance levels used by Internal Audit.
15. Once the Annual Governance Statement has been approved by the Authority, it is signed by the Chair and the Chief Executive and published alongside the Annual Accounts.

Conclusions from the Self-Assessment

16. This year, the assurance level is assessed as “SUBSTANTIAL” for both assurance statements (the Annual Governance Statement and the Operational Assurance Statement). This indicates that in general strong systems and sound controls are in place, but that there are some processes where one or more of the following were identified. However these do not have a significant impact on residual risk exposure:
 - Some of the control documentation is in the process of being updated.
 - Any findings identified whilst being updated will be progressed.
 - Further training and/or knowledge of some policy areas will be undertaken as necessary.
17. The corporate list of policies continues to be updated as necessary, and the Authority has an effective system of managing this. To ensure that reviews and amendments to control documentation are not overlooked in future, a process has been put in place to notify managers when a review is due. The first notification occurs six months before the review date, with a reminder three months before.

18. Generally, the Authority has a well-established, well-documented governance framework and breaches are rare. Documentation and changes are provided via the intranet and available to all staff. Members will from time to time receive reports seeking agreement to new or amended policies, whilst procedures and guidance supporting these is circulated internally as required. Processes for monitoring and validating key processes exist and are maintained regularly. Members should be assured therefore that arrangements operate effectively and provide the level of protection required. The annual reports of the Head of Internal Audit and the External Auditors, considered elsewhere on this agenda (Items B5 and B8 respectively), also confirm this position.
19. Looking to the future over the coming year a review will be undertaken on the annual governance statement to ensure it remains fit for purpose and aligned with best practice in the sector nationally.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

20. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION

21. Members are requested to:
 - 21.1 Approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21, which includes the Operational Assurance Statement.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21

Introduction

[Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority](#) is responsible for ensuring that it delivers its services in accordance with the prevailing legislation, regulations and government guidance and that proper standards of stewardship, conduct, and professional competence are followed to by those working for and with the Authority. Good governance is key to the ethical stance of the organisation and the Authority is committed to applying the principles of good governance as set out in the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016'. This ensures that the services provided to the people of Kent and Medway are delivered efficiently, effectively and fairly, that public money is used wisely, is properly accounted for and achieves optimum value for money. The Authority is committed to continuously improving its services to meet the needs of the public; reviewing and developing what it does and consulting with the public where appropriate.

In discharging these responsibilities, the Authority is required to ensure that appropriate arrangements are put in place for the control and management of its business affairs, service performance and finances, and for the management of the risks it faces. It also makes a commitment to keep under review its governance arrangements and address any key issues should they arise. The Authority is required to comply with the requirements of [Section 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) by undertaking an annual review of its systems of internal control. The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is the review of these systems of internal control along with an assessment of their effectiveness.

Additionally, government guidance requires the Authority to undertake a separate self-assessment of operational performance (known as the Operational Assurance Statement), and this is incorporated within this Statement. [Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework which sets priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England. Fire and rescue authorities have a statutory duty to have regard to the National Framework. The Operational Assurance Statement is the assessment of the position of the Authority against the National Framework.

The current [Fire and Rescue National Framework](#) was published on 1 June 2018.

The Annual Governance Statement and Operational Assurance Statement set out the results of the assessment for 2020/21 and enable the reader to form a view of how the Authority meets its duty to deliver services to the people of Kent and Medway effectively and fairly.

What is governance?

The [Governance Framework](#) is the structure which allows the Authority to carry out and deliver its published objectives whilst providing the oversight to ensure that Members and everyone that works for us abide by the [Code of Corporate Governance](#). Revised in July 2020, it consists of the systems, controls and procedures that ensure that positive activities are undertaken and that undesirable events are avoided through an assessment of the likelihood and potential impact of the risks faced by the Authority.

The processes being reviewed for this Statement have operated throughout the whole of the financial year ending 31 March 2021 and have remained in operation up to the date of approval of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts, subject to those changes and additions made during the year as referred to below. An assessment of the effectiveness of the key elements of the framework which are in place to meet the Authority's responsibilities under the Code of Corporate Governance are set out in the following pages, together with details of any new or revised policies and procedures introduced during the year.

Who is responsible for ensuring good governance?

The Authority has overall responsibility for ensuring effective governance arrangements are in place, with the Authority meeting five times a year to conduct its business. The Chief Executive has management responsibility for ensuring that effective controls and processes are implemented across the Authority in compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance, and that these are regularly reviewed and updated with regular reports submitted to the Authority. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is responsible for ensuring that effective financial controls are in place, the provision of an effective internal audit function, and for reviewing the overall effectiveness of the Governance Framework. However, the whole corporate leadership team has collective responsibility for setting the strategic direction and managing the finances, albeit the Director of Finance and Corporate Services leads in coordinating and facilitating a culture of efficiency and value for money. The future strategic direction will be set out in an updated suite of six strategies, each covering specific areas of the organisation, and detailing what has been achieved and what we aim to achieve. These will be presented to the Authority in July 2021, but will be a core part of what is reported in the annual Customer Safety Plan.

The responsibility for ensuring that appropriate systems of internal control are introduced and complied with, remain effective and are regularly reviewed, is delegated to a number of senior managers at Director or Assistant Director level across the Authority. They are charged with delivery of those functions incorporated within each of the functional elements comprising the overall Governance Framework. Where the Authority has developed arrangements to work in collaboration with other fire and rescue authorities or other public bodies, such as the police, every effort is made to ensure that the principles of good governance that are in place within the Authority also operate within the management processes of those collaborative arrangements.

What this statement tells you

This Statement is in two parts and provides, firstly, a summarised account, based on a self-assessment, of how our management arrangements meet the principles of good governance set out in our Code of Corporate Governance; and secondly, how we deliver the requirements of the current Fire and Rescue National Framework; and how we obtain assurance that these are both effective and appropriate. It is written to provide a clear, simple assessment of how the Governance Framework has operated over the past financial year and identifies any improvements made and any weaknesses or gaps in the arrangements that require addressing.

Its main aim is to provide the reader with confidence that the Authority is effectively managed, and delivers the services required in accordance with current legislation and our stated aims, objectives and values. The following pages provide links to our website to enable the reader to access the key governance documents and evidence that we monitor compliance in line with the requirements of our Code of Corporate Governance.

Once approved by Authority, the Annual Governance Statement is [published on our website alongside the statement of accounts](#). Paper copies of this report are also available from: Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, The Godlands, Tovil, Maidstone ME15 6XB, or by telephone on 01622 692121. We will also accept requests made via social media.

The Assurance Process – How we provide and use assurance information

IDENTIFY	ASSESS	REVIEW	ACT
What do we want assurance on?	How is that assurance provided?	How is that assurance reviewed and validated?	What do we do with the information received?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That we comply with our Code of Corporate Governance • That we deliver the services, and objectives set out in our Customer & Corporate Plan • That we take account of the views of stakeholders and customers • That we use and account for public money properly • That the risks we face are effectively managed • That we comply with legislation, regulation and statutory guidance • That we get the best out of our Members and employees • That we collaborate effectively where it improves services • That we demonstrate high standards of ethical behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Auditor's Reports • Internal Auditor's Reports • HMICFRS inspection reports • Feedback received from our customers and partners • Senior managers' self-assessment of key controls, including compliance with the CIPFA statement on "The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government" • Operational Assurance processes • Performance and risk monitoring and reporting • Continuous coaching dialogue and performance management • Comparison with our peers • Awards and accreditations received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular performance reports have been presented to Members via the Authority • Regular reports reviewed and monitored by Corporate Management Board and Corporate Portfolio Board • Regular monitoring of key performance information • Publishing of key performance information and data for public access and scrutiny • Regular reports and information to Government Departments • External and Internal Audit validation • Public scrutiny and challenge of key performance and financial information published on our website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate our results to the public • Consider the findings, learn from the information received, and respond accordingly • Update our plans to deliver improvements • Revisit our key controls and make improvements where required • Provide additional training and support where needed • Monitor the achievement of the changes we make and the direction of travel • Develop a specific action plan to deliver any governance improvements required • Learn from experiences and continually look to improve

How did we do?

The Authority is required by section 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to undertake an annual review of the systems of internal control and to prepare an Annual Governance Statement which sets out the results of that review. Under section 10 of the Regulations, the AGS must be published alongside the Annual Statement of Accounts. The overall level of assurance is assessed against a five-tier RAG (red, amber, green) rating. The criteria that inform this rating are drawn from the definitions in the assurance levels used by Internal Audit. From the 2019/20 financial year, the assurance levels were expanded from three to five tiers in order to ensure consistency with the approach set by Internal Audit. These are displayed on page 60 of this Statement. The 2020/21 review was undertaken between March and April 2021 and has been informed by the following:

- The views of the External Auditor, in the External Auditor's Findings Report 2019/20 and the Annual Letter, presented to the [October 2020](#) and [December 2020](#) Authority meetings respectively.
- The views of the Head of Internal Audit contained in the Internal Auditor's Annual Report 2019/20 and the Internal Audit 2019/20 mid-year progress report, presented to the [July 2020](#) and [December 2020](#) Authority meetings respectively.
- The results of the self-assessments undertaken by senior officers responsible for functional areas of the Service and validated by the Corporate Management Board, including the level of awareness of the role and interrelationship between control systems.
- External awards and recognition, including the Authority being awarded '[Good](#)' by [HMICFRS across all three inspection areas](#) and the [HMICFRS inspection of the Authority's response to covid-19](#).
- A review of our performance against our stated objectives and targets for 2020/21.
- The risk management process and a review and update of the Corporate Risk Register that is presented to the [July 2020](#) and [December 2020](#) Authority meetings. The Corporate Risk register is reviewed by the Authority annually.
- The effectiveness of any changes and improvements made to the governance framework during the last financial year.
- An assessment of our response to the coronavirus pandemic and its consequent effects upon the Authority's governance arrangements, including the [HMICFRS inspection of the Authority's response to covid-19](#).

The effects of the coronavirus pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact across the Authority, but the overall effect on governance arrangements has been limited. Initially this resulted in the cancellation of the April 2020 Authority meeting, albeit regular updates were provided to Members on a number of key issues throughout the pandemic. However, as the scale of the pandemic became evident it meant that the way planned future meetings were held had to be adapted and the holding of virtual meetings was enabled by the Coronavirus Act 2020. Authority meetings between July 2020 and April 2021 were held virtually. However, the High Court has now ruled that from May 2021 public meetings must return to a physical attendance and so the facility to hold

virtual public meetings is no longer available. Another impact has been the absence of a dedicated Independent Person since March 2020 due to the pandemic affecting recruitment. However, in order to mitigate this the Authority arranged access to Kent County Council's Independent Person.

To support our partner agencies and the people of Kent and Medway, the Service undertook a wide range of additional work across Kent and Medway, which involved both frontline and corporate colleagues. There was a temporary suspension of some non-emergency functions and secondary activities. Operational crewing was maintained, and due to the availability of on-call firefighters furloughed from their primary employment, fire engine availability increased. Additional work undertaken included the following activities: supporting SECamb (South East Coast Ambulance Service) with logistics and delivery of PPE to ambulance facilities across Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex and Surrey; making our Fleet Technicians available to assist with ambulance breakdowns; operational crews responding to falls in the home; supporting SECamb with testing equipment and PPE; releasing KFRS staff to undertake more supportive work to SECamb colleagues, and acting as the procurement hub for the provision of covid PPE to all 45 fire and rescue services in England. In addition, the Service assisted Kent County Council with the distribution of food parcels to the vulnerable and elderly, delivered meals for Age UK and provided pharmacies with support for delivery of prescriptions. Fire prevention and fire protection activity continued through the pandemic, initially at a reduced level, however it was specifically targeted on those most at risk, and those at increased risk due to the pandemic. The Service was able to manage the additional work and it did not result in any negative effects upon either the operation of the Authority's governance arrangements or our ability to fulfil our statutory functions – a point that was highlighted and praised by HMICFRS in their covid inspection.

For the Authority's corporate teams, the most significant change was the move to home working from March 2020, ahead of the first lockdown being announced by government. The fact that this was able to take place so effectively and without disruption to the delivery of services by Authority, highlights the strength and resilience of the Authority's IT network and systems and the effective management of these by the Service's Business Change, Information and Technology team. As a result, corporate teams, and flexi-duty operational officers, were able to seamlessly transition to working from home without experiencing any major network issues, restrictions to IT functionality or interruptions to accessing and using the IT systems.

However, these changes to working practices were not just limited to corporate teams or flexi-duty officers. Operational firefighters based at fire stations also experienced a number of changes to their working practices, implemented in order to ensure their safety during the pandemic. These changes across the Authority's operational and corporate teams were made possible by the extensive policy work and amendments to various processes that were undertaken. This work provided the Authority with the appropriate underpinning policy framework. Examples included: developing and publishing a pack of coronavirus related policies; modifying colleagues' terms and conditions to recognise and support regular working from home; relaxing the normal rules on carrying over, rescheduling or delaying annual leave; and developing home study packs to support on-call staff to maintain their operational competencies and skills from home. As well as work to safeguard the physical health of staff, the Authority recognised the additional pressures imposed by the demands of the pandemic – particularly on operational firefighters – and so introduced an enhanced package of support for mental wellbeing across the whole organisation.

In summary, the Authority adapted effectively and efficiently to the considerable demands that were imposed upon it by the coronavirus pandemic – moreover it did so while maintaining its day-to-day service and fulfilling all of its statutory duties. Importantly, this fact was recognised by HMICFRS in their January 2021 report into the Authority’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, the governance arrangements and systems of control employed by the Authority have been shown to be robust and effective, which have allowed it to adapt to the significant challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

Compliance with the principles of the Financial Management Code

Following issues over the past few years with financial management and corporate governance in some local authorities, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA, the professional institute for accountants working in the public services and other bodies where public money needs to be managed) reviewed its guidance and issued the ‘Financial Management Code’ (see [KMFRA, February 2021, Item No: B2](#)). This mandatory Code provides guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities. The intention is that by complying with the principles and standards within the Code, local authorities will be able to demonstrate their financial sustainability. The Code came into effect from 1 April 2020, with the initial 12 months operating as a ‘shadow year’. This was done in order to give local authorities time to prepare for the full implementation deadline of 31 March 2021. The new Financial Management Code is based on six core principles:

1. **Organisational leadership** – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into the organisational culture.
2. **Accountability** – based on medium-term financial planning that drives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
3. Financial management is undertaken with **transparency** as its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer action and elected member decision making.
4. Adherence to professional **standards** is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
5. Sources of **assurance** are recognised as an effective tool mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, internal audit and inspection
6. The long-term **sustainability** of local services is at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.

Following an initial self-assessment of the level of compliance with the Code by the Corporate Management Board in early 2020, the action plan developed at that time was reviewed again at Corporate Board in January 2021. Whilst many of the proposed actions had been progressed and embedded a few remained as work in progress. For example, the redesign and updating of the Corporate Strategies are near completion and as such will be presented to the Authority in July 2021 for their consideration. These will set out the medium term approach and deliverables for the Service and as such will be the basis of much of what is presented in the Medium Term Financial Plan. Established Strategy Boards will monitor their progress

and delivery. The creation of an Audit and Governance Committee has been agreed and its first meeting is planned for November 2021. This will add even more strength to the assurance processes already in place across this Authority, as good financial governance is a key requisite across this Authority.

The level of assurance for 2020/21

On the basis of our internal review of the operation of the Governance Framework (including the effects of the coronavirus pandemic) and our assessment against the provisions of the National Framework (Operational Assurance Statement) the level of assurance for the 2020/21 financial year has been assessed as **SUBSTANTIAL** for both elements. This indicates that in general strong systems and sound controls are in place, but that there are some processes where one or more of the following were identified. However, these do not have a significant impact on residual risk exposure:

- Some control documentation is in the process of being updated.
- Any findings identified whilst being updated will be progressed.
- Further training and/or knowledge of some policy areas will be undertaken as necessary.

Our analysis of the assurance available against each of the six frameworks is set out on pages 10 to 20 of this statement. This identifies the main changes to the framework last year, those planned for the coming year and the information used to provide assurance of the effectiveness of the controls in place. Delivery of the agreed improvements will be monitored by senior management.

The Governance Framework

The overarching framework is made up of six underlying frameworks within which The Authority's corporate policies sit. Collectively these ensure that the key principles of governance are delivered and the requirements set out in set out in the Code of Corporate Governance are met.

Financial Management Framework	Service Delivery Framework	Democratic Framework	Information Management Framework	Performance Management Framework	Human Resources Framework
Anti-Bribery Policy Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Anti-Money Laundering Policy Budget Manager and Officer Scheme of Delegation Charging Policy Charitable Donations and Grants Policy Disposals Policy Exchequer Framework Policy Financial Management Policy Financial Planning Policy Gifts and Hospitality Code of Practice Modern Slavery Policy Premises Sharing Policy Procurement Policy Purchasing Card Policy Risk Financing and Insurance Policy Risk Management Policy Supplier References Policy	Automatic Fire Alarm Policy Contingencies Policy Driving at Work Policy Emergency Planning and Contingencies Policy Enforcement Policy Firefighter Access and Buildings Policy Flying the Flag Policy Incident Command and the Management of Operational Incidents - Policy Statement Licensing and Events Policy Risk Based Inspection Programme Policy Safeguarding Policy Smoke Alarm Policy	The Kent Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 Authority Standing Orders Members' Code of Conduct Convention on Member/Officer Relations Committee Terms of Reference Code of Corporate Governance	Data Protection and Information Security Policy Freedom of Information Policy Information Technology Policy Subject Access Request Policy Publication and Retention Scheme 2019 to 2023 Service-wide privacy notice Suite of privacy notices (33 in total)	Feedback and Allegations Policy Transparency Policy Policy Handling Policy Community Right to Challenge Policy	Accommodation Policy Annual Leave Policy Apprenticeship Scheme Bullying and Harassment Policy Capability Policy Code of Ethical Conduct Compulsory Transfer Policy Conditions of Service Grey Book Covid-19 Annual Leave Carry Over Policy Covid-19 Contact Tracing Policy Covid-19 Quarantine Policy Covid-19 Return to Work for Operational Staff Policy Covid-19 Safe Working and Employee Wellbeing Policy Covid-19 Testing Policy Day Duty System Disciplinary Policy Employment Checks Policy Family Related Policy Flexible Duty Systems – Level 2 and 3 Flexible Rostering Duty System – Shift, DC and CTERC Flexible Working Policy Grievance Policy Health and Wellbeing Policy

Our self-assessment for 2020/21

1. Financial Management Framework

The Financial Management framework continues to operate well with the External Auditor commenting on the high quality of the final accounts and the supporting information. The Authority's financial statements were submitted in a timely fashion and an unqualified opinion on the accounts was issued in advance of the national deadline of 30 November 2020. A strong anti-fraud culture ensured that no issues were reported during year. The Medium Term Financial Plan is robust with reasonable assumptions made in the absence of definitive information.

The start of work on the 2020/21 audit plan was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic and the departure in May 2020 of the previous Head of Internal Audit. This meant that work on the nine internal audits planned for 2020/21 did not commence until July 2020. However, despite the delayed start, seven of the audits were completed by the end of April 2021, with the other two being deferred until 2021/22. The average rating of the audits was 'substantial' with one given 'high'.

In order to improve standards of financial management and corporate governance among local authorities, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) reviewed its guidance and issued a new 'Financial Management Code'. The aim of this mandatory code is to support good practice in financial management and demonstrate financial sustainability. The Code came into effect from 1 April 2020 as a shadow year in order to give local authorities time to prepare, with full implementation by 31 March 2021. Following an initial self-assessment of the Authority's level of compliance with the Code, a plan was developed to ensure that the Authority was compliant by the March 2021 implementation date.

There has been a wide-ranging review of policies in the framework. A strong and well publicised financial management control framework exists with almost all documentation within its review dates, all of which is made available to staff through the internet. Financial support and training for managers is provided by finance staff as required. Financial management is considered to be strong, with active management and regular monitoring of expenditure. The Authority has a prudent level of general reserves in place as well as specific earmarked reserves for key infrastructure projects.

The following framework documents were updated/introduced during the past year	During the coming year we plan to review/introduce the following documents	Sources of assurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Bribery Policy • Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy • Anti-Money Laundering Policy • Budget Mgr and Officer Scheme of Delegation • Charging Policy • Charitable Donations and Grants Policy • Disposals Policy • Financial Management Policy • Financial Planning Policy • Gifts and Hospitality Code of Practice • Modern Slavery Policy • Premises Sharing Policy • Procurement Policy • Purchasing Card Policy • Risk Financing and Insurance Policy • Risk Management Policy • Supplier References Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchequer Framework Policy • Budget Manager and Officers Scheme of Delegation 	Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25 Annual Accounts 2019/20 Financial update for 2020/21, KMFRA December 2020 Budget Outturn Report 2019/20 and Financial Update for 2020/21, KMFRA July 2020 External Auditor's Findings Report 2019/20, KMFRA July 2020 Internal Audit Mid-Year Progress Report, KMFRA December 2020 Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20, KMFRA July 2020 Financial Strategies Assets Strategy and Commercial and Procurement Strategy (within the Customer Safety Plan) Draft Financial Strategies for 2021/22, KMFRA December 2020 Refreshed Customer Safety Plan including Efficiency Statement, 2020-2024, KMFRA, July 2020

2. Service Delivery Framework

Following the establishment of the Operational Assurance (OA) team in 2018, the Authority has continued to develop and refine its ability to collate information and learn from incidents. To ensure that this knowledge continues to drive improvements in operational performance, the 'Critical Incident Framework' (CIF) was introduced in 2019. Because incidents range from relatively simple events to highly complex and dynamic environments, the CIF provides a way to categorise them to ensure the information, intelligence and data recorded are proportionate to the 'criticality' of the incident, thereby reducing inefficiencies related to information gathering and maximising the benefit of the data and information that are collected. The criticality of an incident depends on a number of factors, such as the number of people injured, killed or affected, premises destroyed or damaged, environmental damage, the scale of resources required, if specialist resources are required, and the scale of multi-agency response. The CIF sits within the OA team, who were established in 2018 to monitor, review and improve the quality of operational response. The effectiveness of this new approach was clear in the 'Substantial' assurance awarded to the OA team following the review by Internal Audit in 2019. Within the policy framework the majority of documents have been updated and refreshed into the new format.

The Authority is required to undertake regular operational exercises against key current risks and threats in Kent and Medway. In 2018/19 a three year training and exercise plan was developed to co-ordinate these Service-level exercises. Following on from the pandemic scenario exercise undertaken in 2018, a business continuity exercise was undertaken in late 2019 to review, test and update our planning arrangements for industrial action, which included looking at full industrial action and Action Short of Strike (ASOS). Although the Covid pandemic initially impacted the Service Assurance programme, this has been addressed by looking at new ways of training and exercising.

For 2020/21, fire activity increased approximately 10% compared to the previous year, this being attributed to a larger number of accidental rubbish and grassland fires over the summer period. As a result, performance against the fire indicators remains higher than target. Despite lockdown, general activity was as expected, the only substantial reduction being in the number of RTCs attended.

Partnership working continues to be a key feature of how the Authority operates and we continue to develop strong and lasting working relationships with Kent Police, SECamb, other fire and rescue services, local authorities, NHS clinical commissioning groups, and many other agencies. Covid-19 has highlighted the work carried out with other agencies, much of which has been detailed in the coronavirus section on pages 5 to 7. The hosting of the Kent Resilience Forum by the Authority and the associated input of our staff into the Forum's response and recovery groups for covid has been fundamental to the positive impact of the Forum on the Kent response to the pandemic.

Fire Control has implemented several important changes to its way of working this year. Along with a more customer focussed approach to call handling, a recruitment programme has increased the number of control operators on duty (meeting some of the outcomes of the Grenfell inquiry). In line with the transition to National Guidance by operational crews, Fire Control's processes and documentation have also been updated to reflect the national agenda. This is also reflected in control staff moving to the Station Based Programme in alignment with operational crews.

The following framework documents were updated/introduced during the past year	During the coming year we plan to review/introduce the following documents	Sources of assurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement Policy • FF Access and Buildings Policy • Risk Based Inspection Programme Policy • Smoke Alarm Policy • Licensing and Events Policy • Safeguarding Policy • Flying the Flag Policy • Automatic Fire Alarms Policy • Annual review of Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent (HSF 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident Command and the Management of Operational Incidents • Emergency Planning and Contingencies Policy • Automatic Fire Alarms Policy 	<p>Community Safety Strategy and Operational Response Strategy (within Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024)</p> <p>Refreshed Customer Safety Plan including Efficiency Statement, 2020-2024, KMFRA, July 2020</p> <p>Update on progress to deliver the Corporate Strategies, KMFRA, December 2020</p> <p>Our Customer Promise</p> <p>Performance Management updates to KMFRA</p> <p>Internal Audit Mid-Year Progress Report, KMFRA December 2020 (covering Building Safety)</p> <p>Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20, KMFRA July 2020</p>

3. Democratic Framework

The existing democratic framework has continued to function well and provides a strong framework for Members and Officers working together. The Kent Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 was amended in 2020 to reflect the appointment of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) as a member of the Fire Authority. In addition, the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance was reviewed, updated and subsequently approved in July 2020 as part of both a general refresh and also to give consideration to the requirements of the CIPFA Financial Management Code 2020 (see page 7 for information about this).

Covid-19 has had some impact, for example we have been without a dedicated Independent Person since March 2020 due to the pandemic affecting the recruitment process but we have had access to Kent County Council's Independent Person should we have required this. Authority meetings, since July last year have been held virtually (enabled by the Coronavirus Act 2020). However, the recent High Court ruling has set out the fact that public meetings must revert to a physical presence, so future Authority meetings will no longer be held virtually. All Authority meetings are open to the public (currently virtually) and publicised in advance; copies of reports and minutes recording decisions are published on our website. The Clerk to the Authority attends all Member meetings so is on hand to advise on protocol and procedures.

The contract for the Authority's Monitoring Officer expired on 31 March 2021. For many years this role had been undertaken by Kent County Council's Head of Legal, however from 1 April 2021, the contract has been awarded to Medway Council.

Another important development was the publication in 2019 by the Committee on Standards in Public Life of a review of ethical standards in local government – the first such review since the Standards Board for England was abolished in 2012. As a consequence of the proposals contained within this review, the Kent Secretaries Group (the body representing Monitoring Officers across Kent) propose to review and update the Kent Model of the Code of Conduct. This is in turn likely to affect the Members' Code of Conduct published by KMFRA as it is based on the Kent Model. Once the Kent Model has been updated, a report will be brought to a future meeting of the Authority to consider and agree any revisions to the Members' Code of Conduct.

To add increased assurance and review to the governance processes in place across the Authority, Members have agreed to establish an Audit and Governance Committee, with the first meeting being held in November 2021. This new committee will have oversight of issues such as risk management, internal and external audit, treasury issues and the final accounts process. Members have agreed the terms of reference for this committee and, through a joint collaboration exercise with the police, we are in the process of advertising for an independent person to chair it. It is envisaged that there will be three Authority meetings and three Audit and Governance meetings each year.

The following framework documents were updated/introduced during the past year	During the coming year we plan to review/introduce the following documents	Sources of assurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kent Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 • Authority Standing Orders • Convention on Member/Officer Relations • Members' Code of Conduct • Code of Corporate Governance • Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee – Terms of Reference • Terms of Reference for the new Audit and Governance Committee agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct 	Authority Constitutional Documents Request for the PCC to become a Member of the Fire Authority, KMFRA February 2020 Member Allowances Scheme 2021/22, KMFRA February 2021 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies for 2020/21, KMFRA July 2020 Appointment of Monitoring Officer, KMFRA February 2021 (NB: with effect from April 2021) Agreement to creation of an Audit Committee, KMFRA February 2021

4. Information Management Framework

Arguably the most striking thing about the move to home working during the pandemic was the strength and robustness of the Authority's IT network and infrastructure. Whilst the Authority had been able to support widespread homeworking for limited periods, principally due to poor weather preventing staff from getting to their offices prior to the pandemic, this had never been undertaken across such a large number of people for such a long period of time. However, from the outset of the move to homeworking in March 2020, virtually all of the Authority's approximately corporate teams were able to log on and work from home without experiencing any major network issues, restrictions to IT functionality or interruptions to connections to the system.

Against this impressive achievement, information security remains a key issue for the Authority and an increase in collaborative working with other public authorities, as well as an increase in cyber-attacks such as ransomware and denial of access on public agencies in the UK, has heightened the potential risks. All staff have undertaken compulsory data protection and security training and additional controls have been introduced to limit the risk of unwanted exposure. The coronavirus-induced move to homeworking among all headquarters staff and non-operational teams based at fire stations, meant that this took on an added importance. The Authority continues to remind staff of the dangers and the consequences of breaches of data protection policies and there is a dedicated section of the intranet to provide staff with information about this. We operate high levels of protection and security and regularly review and test these.

Following the move to home working, the Authority undertook an audit and review of the limited number of staff and teams who needed to handle personal data in hard copy at home. For some this led to a change in working practices to electronic only, while those staff and teams who were determined to still have an identified need to handle hard copy personal data at home were issued with secure and lockable document storage. The last internal audit review of information governance within the Authority, recorded the assurance level as 'Substantial', confirming that internal control, governance and management of risk are sound overall and that the arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal controls are largely suitably designed and applied effectively. A follow up of this is to be undertaken later in 2021.

The Authority has an up-to-date suite of data protection related policies; these comprise the Data Protection and Information Security Policy, the Freedom of information Policy, and the Subject Access Request Policy. All of these are reviewed and refreshed as necessary. A global privacy statement is in place and 33 individual privacy notices have been published on our website. Furthermore, all staff have received training about GDPR and the principles of data protection, something that also forms part of the induction package for new employees when they join the Authority. A refreshed version of this training will be re-issued in 2021/22.

During 2020/21 there was a reduction in the number of Freedom of Information Act requests, which may be the result of the coronavirus pandemic. Nonetheless, of the 216 requests received over the period, despite the additional demands on staff time imposed by the pandemic, all FOI requests were responded to within the statutory timeframe of 20 working days. The average response time being just nine working days, which is less than half that of the statutory limit. The Authority also meets the additional reporting requirements of the Freedom of Information Code of Practice 2018. Confidentiality and data sharing agreements have been put in place with key partners to ensure as far as possible that similar standards of security operate across these arrangements where data sharing exists. Finally, data protection impact assessments are also undertaken where relevant to ensure that data privacy issues are identified and effectively managed.

The following framework documents were updated/introduced during the past year	During the coming year we plan to review/introduce the following documents	Sources of assurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection and Information Security Policy • Freedom of Information Policy • Information Technology Policy • Subject Access Request Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication and Retention Scheme 2019 to 2023 • Suite of privacy notices 	<p>External IT Security report*</p> <p>Freedom of Information Update, KMFRA February 2021</p> <p>Freedom of information and annual customer feedback update, KMFRA October 2020</p> <p>Update to Data Protection and Information Security Policy, KMFRA December 2019</p> <p>Publication and Retention Scheme (updated for 2019 to 2023)</p> <p>Freedom of Information Policy</p> <p>Subject Access Request Policy</p> <p>Privacy Statement and Privacy Notices</p> <p>IT and Business Change Strategy (within Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024)</p> <p>*This report is excluded from release under Section 24 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000</p>

5. Performance Management Framework

The Performance Management Framework is well established and includes opportunities for public and staff consultation and feedback on our proposals, plans and performance, which are always taken into account as part of our decision-making. We publish our plans and performance targets on our website and regularly provide updates of progress against these targets. Related policies have been updated to a new more accessible format, alongside being reviewed in the process.

In July 2020, our updated Customer and Corporate Plan 2020-2024 was approved by KMFR. The document has since been renamed the Customer Safety Plan in line with our stated focus on the customer. The plan itself is structured in a customer-facing way around safety at home, safety on the roads, community resilience, business safety and operations. Previously there was a set of eight underpinning strategies, but these are currently in the process of being redefined, and will reduce to six. The expectation is that they will be presented to the Authority for review and approval at the July 2021 meeting.

The Authority publishes on its website all data required by government, together with additional information for which we receive regular requests or which aids assessment of its performance. This includes the Localism Act 2011, the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 and the Freedom of Information Code of Practice 2018. Complaints and other feedback are regularly reviewed and reported. A small number of complaints were received this year, six of which were founded. In contrast, 96 compliments were logged. All complaints are taken seriously and are fully investigated, and outcomes are shared with the complainants.

The following framework documents were updated/introduced during the past year	During the coming year we plan to review/introduce the following documents	Sources of assurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Handling Policy Transparency Policy Feedback and Allegations Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Right to Challenge Service Order 	Safety and Wellbeing Plan update 2020/24, KMFR October 2020 Safety and Wellbeing Plan consultation update, KMFR February 2020 Refreshed Customer Safety Plan (inc Performance and Data Strategy), 2020-2024, KMFR July 2020 Update on progress to deliver the Performance and Data Strategy, KMFR December 2020 Financial performance reports Procurement Reports Performance updates to each KMFR meeting Annual Report on Customers' Feedback. KMFR October 2020

6. Human Resources Framework

We are committed to ensuring this is a place where everyone that works for us feels comfortable with their own identity and that they are treated with dignity and respect. Great importance is placed on supporting colleagues with their physical and mental wellbeing and we have developed a culture which actively challenges the stigma around mental health and the associated barriers to seeking help and support for mental well-being. The Authority has a comprehensive range of support for colleagues through the Employee Assistance Programme, this is supplemented by a network of Wellbeing Champions who provide a confidential service to support colleagues' physical and mental wellbeing. Everyone that works for us has completed mandatory online training in psychological support and wellbeing. The past year has seen the introduction of 24/7 Wellbeing Support Officers to provide out of hours support. In addition, we have put in place wellbeing support those colleagues who have regular exposure to emotionally demanding situations, examples include the Safe and Well Officers and the Designated Safeguarding Officers. We have also continued to roll out mental health first aid training and there are now 70 Mental Health First Aiders across the Service.

Conduct is taken very seriously and we have introduced a new Service-wide ethical code of conduct and an ethical code of conduct specifically for senior managers. This was also accompanied by the publication of a new 'Speak up' policy, which challenges negative perceptions of 'whistleblowing' and aims to give anyone with legitimate concerns an effective means to voice them.

In response to the demands of the coronavirus pandemic, we have carried out extensive policy work and adapted a number of processes and approaches to ensure colleagues are adequately supported with the new challenges this has presented. Examples include: developing and publishing a pack of coronavirus related policies; modifying colleagues' terms and conditions to recognise and support regular working from home; a relaxation of the normal rules on carrying over, rescheduling or delaying annual leave; reviewing compliance with Working Time Regulations; creating a covid risk score; developing a tailored return to work test for operational staff who had contracted covid-19; establishing our own contract tracing cell; introducing a health and safety DSE assessment tool and HSE stress indicator assessment; and developing home study packs to support on-call firefighters to maintain their competency from home.

Everyone that works for us is encouraged to maintain their professional competence and seek development opportunities. To support this, we secured access to 'LinkedIn Learning', which offers a comprehensive external online learning platform. The move away from the traditional annual appraisal, to an environment where everyone is given regular feedback and where appropriate performance coaching is supplemented by a talent benchmarking process for uniformed colleagues is now well-established. Following its inception in 2020, the new integrated approach to learning and testing for operational staff (referred to as 'ILAM'), continues to move the Authority towards an effective and safe operational workforce that has been tested as competent and is licenced to respond to the varied range of incidents we attend.

The latest report on the gender pay gap (year ending 31 March 2020) shows a mean pay gap of 5.1% in favour of women, which equates to £0.84 per hour more than the rate of pay received by males. This is an increase on the 3.9% (£0.62) for 2019 and is likely due to significant female representation at Corporate Management Board and senior management level. However, median male pay is 0.9% (£0.14) more than women and is representative of the fact that the workforce is predominately male. We are committed to addressing the attraction and retention of women, protecting career progression and inclusive recruitment. Our brand review will enhance our flexibility and we continue to raise awareness of inclusion and diversity. These, along with other steps including research, leadership framework, talent benchmarking and continuing policy review, show our commitment to reducing the gender pay gap.

The following framework documents were updated/introduced during the past year	During the coming year we plan to review/introduce the following documents	Sources of assurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation Policy • Annual Leave Policy • Bullying and Harassment Policy • Capability Policy • Code of Ethical Conduct • Compulsory Transfer Policy • Covid-19 Annual Leave Carry Over Policy • Covid-19 Contact Tracing Policy • Covid-19 Quarantine Policy • Covid-19 Return to Work for Operational Staff Policy • Covid-19 Safe Working and Employee Wellbeing Policy • Covid-19 Testing Policy • Day Duty System • Family Related Policy • Flexible Rostering Duty System – Shift, DC and CTERC • Health and Wellbeing Policy • Recruitment and Selection Policy • Structural Change Policy • Supporting Professional Development Policy • Working Time Policy and Guidance (previously named Working Time Regulations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overtime for Grey Book Staff Policy • Flexible Duty Systems – Level 2 & 3 • Industrial Relations – Uniformed Staff Policy • Covid-19 Safe Working and Employee Wellbeing Policy • Covid-19 Annual Leave Carry Over Policy • Covid-19 Testing Policy • Covid-19 Quarantine Policy • Pay and Other Payments for Service Support Staff Policy • Covid-19 Contact Tracing Policy • Employment Checks Policy • Flexible Rostering Duty System – Shift, DC and CTERC • Industrial Relations and Joint Consultation Policy for Service Support Staff • Pensions Policy • Flexible Working Policy • Special Leave Policy • Disciplinary Policy • Other (Secondary) Employment Policy • Grievance Policy • Social Media Policy • Supporting Attendance at Work Policy 	<p>Gender Pay Gap Report 2020</p> <p>Update for Authority on Gender Pay Gap Report 2020, KMFRA October 2020</p> <p>People Strategy (within Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024)</p> <p>Update on progress to deliver the People Strategy, KMFRA December 2020</p> <p>Customer Safety Plan, 2020-2024</p> <p>Customer Safety Plan update, KMFRA July 2020</p> <p>We have a number of different internal groups who we will consult with regarding new policies and procedures, e.g. FBU, Wellbeing Champions, Staff Forum, LGBT Allies.</p> <p>Feedback through staff forum representatives</p>

Operational Assurance Statement 2020/21

Government guidance requires the Authority to undertake a separate self-assessment of operational performance (known as the Operational Assurance Statement). [Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) requires the Secretary of State to prepare a [Fire and Rescue National Framework](#) which sets priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in England in connection with the discharge of their functions. FRAs have a statutory duty to have regard to the National Framework. The Operational Assurance Statement is the assessment of the position of the Authority against the National Framework. The revised Fire and Rescue National Framework for England came into effect on 1 June 2018 and is organised around the following seven sections:

Section 1. Introduction

This section highlights five priorities for all FRAs in England. These are to:

- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents.
- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face.
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Section 2. Delivery of functions

This section deals with risk assessment and countywide resilience, and how the FRA plans to mitigate these risks through either operational response, or prevention activities. The Framework also sets a number of expectations of what an integrated risk management plan (IRMP)¹ should contain.

Section 3. National Resilience

This section requires FRAs to make arrangements to support national resilience, including working across borders and responding to terrorist incidents.

Section 4. Governance

This section sets out the processes by which a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) can prepare a business case to take sole charge of their local FRA, and submit that case to the Secretary of State. It is a requirement for FRAs to provide any information the PCC may reasonably require in order

¹ NB: Within KFRS, the Safety and Wellbeing Plan is a consultation document with the outcomes reflected in the Customer and Corporate Plan. We choose not to use the term 'Integrated Risk Management Plan' because, as a public facing document, we find that Safety and Wellbeing Plan is better understood. The term IRMP itself is likely to be replaced soon by Community Risk Management Plan.

to develop such a case. It also sets out the role of the NFCC in providing operational advice and guidance to the sector as part of the national coordination and advisory framework.

Section 5. Achieving value for money

This section contains a number of recommendations regarding reserves. It also makes engagement in national procurement schemes mandatory, but only where appropriate. For example, if a national procurement of goods or services has been recently undertaken, FRAs will be expected to use any framework contract that results. If they choose not to, there is an expectation they will need to account for that decision.

Section 6. Workforce

This is a largely new section in the Framework. All FRAs are expected to have a workforce strategy which aligns with the national workforce strategy. Following a consultation early in 2017, the Government has included wording in the draft Framework which limits the practice of re-engaging retired staff at all levels of the workforce, except in absolutely exceptional circumstances.

Section 7. Inspection, intervention and accountability

This section places responsibilities on FRAs to cooperate with the inspection process and requests for information and data. It restates the powers of intervention into a failing (or at risk of failing) FRA which are available to the Secretary of State under Section 22 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This new edition makes meeting the transparency code relevant to each FRA mandatory (for KMFRA this is the Local Government Transparency Code 2015).

Section 1. Introduction

1.1 Powers

Under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (“the 2004 Act”), the Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework. The Framework:

- a) must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;
- b) may contain guidance to fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions; and
- c) may contain any other matter relating to fire and rescue authorities or their functions that the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

1.2 Priorities

The priorities in this Framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:

- make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents;
- identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
- collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide;
- be accountable to communities for the service they provide; and
- develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

How to we meet these requirements?

The Authority has published an [Operational Response Strategy](#) which is concerned with making sure the right resources are in the right place at the right time. This is one of the eight supporting strategies of the Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024.

Originally published in 2018, our Customer and Corporate Plan was refreshed in April 2019 and further refreshed in 2020, when it was renamed the Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024. References to this will be based on the title in use at the time of publication.

Where do we get assurance from?

[Update on the Operational Response strategy. KMFR December 2020 \(Item No. B10\)](#)

[KMFR approval for the refreshed Customer Safety Plan, 2020-2024. KMFR December 2020 \(Item No: B10\)](#)

[Our Customer Promise](#)

[Performance Management updates to KMFR](#)

[Internal Audit Mid-Year Progress Report \(including follow up progress summary of audit of Ops Assurance and Business Continuity Management\). KMFR December 2020 \(Item No: C1\)](#)

<p>We publish a Safety and Wellbeing Plan², as well as the technical appendices and strategies supporting the plan. This sets out the key changes to the way the Authority provides its services to the communities of Kent and Medway.</p> <p>We report the outcomes of consultation on the Safety and Wellbeing Plan.</p>	<p>Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2024 update</p> <p>Safety and Wellbeing Plan update. Outcomes of consultation. KMFR February 2021 (Item No: C1)</p> <p>KMFR approval of draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan Update 2021. KMFR October 2020 (Item No: B4)</p> <p>Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2020</p>
<p>All projects proposed in the Safety and Wellbeing Plan and subsequently approved by KMFR are reflected in the Customer Safety Plan 2020-24.</p>	
<p>We have a mature risk assessment process which draws in data from a variety of internal databases and external sources.</p>	<p>Kent Community Risk Register</p> <p>Update on Corporate Risk Register. KMFR, July 2020 (Item No: B2)</p>
<p>We are a key organisation within the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF). The KRF is a local resilience forum which has been set up to ensure that agencies and organisations plan and work together, to ensure a co-ordinated response to emergencies that could have a significant impact on communities in Kent. It was fundamental to coordinating the response to both the coronavirus pandemic and the UK's departure from the EU.</p>	<p>Kent Resilience Forum</p>
<p>Our People Strategy (one of the eight supporting strategies of the Customer and Corporate Plan) sets out how we develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.</p>	<p>Update on progress to deliver the People Strategy. KMFR, December 2020 (Item No: B2)</p>

² From November 2013, the Integrated Risk Management Plan was referred to as the Safety Plan. A significant proportion of the Plan now focuses on the Authority's role in maintaining public health, either through emergency response, or through safety interventions delivered in the home. For this reason, the name of the plan was renamed in November 2015 to Safety and Wellbeing Plan. It is only a vehicle for consultation, and the majority of the requirements of IRMPs are actually delivered by the Corporate Plan in this Authority.

Section 2. Delivery of functions

2.1 Identify and Assess

Every fire and rescue authority must assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect their communities, whether they are local, cross-border, multi-authority and/or national in nature from fires to terrorist attacks. Regard must be had to Community Risk Registers produced by Local Resilience Forums and any other local risk analyses as appropriate.

Fire and rescue authorities must put in place arrangements to prevent and mitigate these risks, either through adjusting existing provision, effective collaboration and partnership working, or building new capability. Fire and rescue authorities should work through the Strategic Resilience Board where appropriate when determining what arrangements to put in place.

How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
The Authority publishes a Safety and Wellbeing Plan in order to consult on the services required to meet future needs. The priorities within this are developed following an assessment of risks across the county.	Safety and Wellbeing Plan update. Outcomes of consultation. KMFR A February 2021 (Item No: C1) Safety and Wellbeing Plan Update 2021-2024, KMFR A October 2020 (Item No: B4) Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2024 update Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2020 KMFR A approval of draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2020. KMFR A October 2019 (Item No: B4)
As part of the development of the Safety and Wellbeing Plan, we conduct a comprehensive review of the risk profile across the county. This supporting information is published on our website.	
The outcomes of the safety and wellbeing plan, once agreed by KMFR A are then fed into the Customer Safety Plan (renamed in July 2020 from the Customer and Corporate Plan). This is structured in a customer-facing way around five objectives: Responding to emergencies; Home safety; Road safety; Assisting businesses; Protecting the wider community. These five objectives are underpinned by eight corporate strategies that support its delivery.	Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024 Refreshed Customer Safety Plan, 2020-2024. KMFR A July 2020 (Item No: B10)

Progress to deliver the actions that underpin each of the eight supporting corporate strategies is reported to KMFRA.	Final update for Members on progress made to deliver the eight strategies in the Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024, as they approach being replaced. KMFRA December 2020 (Item No: B2) Update on progress to deliver the Corporate Strategies. KMFRA December 2019 (Item No: B2)
We publish a county-wide risk profile , which considers risks related to geography, demographics, population, dwellings and other buildings.	
We have a mature risk assessment process which draws in data from a variety of internal databases and external sources.	Performance update. KMFRA March 2021 (Item No: C1)
We conduct detailed analysis and carry out thorough assessments of risk.	Kent Community Risk Register
The Authority produces a Corporate Risk Register detailing the potential strategic, operational and programme risks it faces.	Risk Register Update. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B2)
We are a key organisation within the Kent Resilience Forum.	Kent Resilience Forum
Our emergency cover analytics team, (which includes risk profiling across the county) is co-located with the Operational Assurance team to ensure operational learning is fed into profiling.	
We engage with Community Safety Partnerships. This interaction provides essential local intelligence and is complimented by our Collaboration Team's, who work with other agencies such as parish councils and the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC).	Kent Community Safety Agreement
2.2 Prevent and Protect Fire and rescue authorities must make provision for promoting fire safety, including fire prevention, and have a locally determined risk-based inspection programme in place for enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in premises to which it applies.	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?

<p>We have a single strategy for Community Safety, incorporating both prevention and protection, as we recognised that the two disciplines need to work more closely together to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. This is one of the eight supporting strategies of the Customer Safety Plan.</p> <p>We focus prevention and protection work on those at highest risk.</p>	<p>Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024</p> <p>Final update for Members on progress to deliver the Community Safety strategy in the Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024. KMFRA December 2020 (Item No: B2)</p> <p>Refreshed Customer Safety Plan, 2020-2024 (incorporating the eight supporting strategies including the Community Safety strategy). KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B10)</p> <p>HMICFRS KFRS Inspection report 2018/19 (Section: Preventing fires and other risks)</p>
<p>The Authority has a specialist team of Safe and Well Officers working across Kent and Medway. We deliver approximately 20,000 Safe and Well visits annually, using referrals from other agencies and direct mail to help recruit and target those at most risk.</p>	<p>Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update. KMFRA, April 2021 (Item No: C1)</p> <p>Community and Business Fire Safety Update. KMFRA February 2020 (Item No: C1)</p>
<p>In late 2019, the Authority's Community Safety Team and Technical Fire Safety Team were reorganised and renamed the Customer Safety Team and Building Safety Team respectively. The primary focus of the restructure has been to ensure we deliver a more effective service in a more economical and efficient manner which will meet the future needs of our customers.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement and Safety Update. KMFRA October 2019 (Item No: C1)</p>
<p>The Authority established a Customer Experience and Behaviour Change Team has developed a framework and methodology for embedding behaviour change practices into the Authority's customer and business safety strategies. Also included in this is the ability to evaluate the programme of Safe and Well visits.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement and Safety Update. KMFRA February 2020 (Item No: C1)</p>
<p>The Authority is a member of the Safeguarding Group run by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The group aims to share best practice between FRAs nationally.</p> <p>We are committed to protecting and supporting vulnerable people including children, young people and adults.</p> <p>In accordance with our legal responsibilities, partnership arrangements and data sharing protocols we share information to assist action by other</p>	<p>Safeguarding updates to KMFRA:</p> <p>KMFRA approval for Modern Slavery Policy. KMFRA February 2021 (Item No: B3)</p> <p>Refreshed Safeguarding Policy. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B2)</p> <p>Our Safeguarding commitment and Feedback and Allegations Policy</p>

agencies where the safeguarding of the vulnerable person is outside the scope and capabilities of the Service.	
<p>The Authority has moved to one single system to collect, store and share risk information – Microsoft Dynamics. This replaces the three separate Microsoft CRM systems that were previously in use; one each for Building Safety, Customer Safety and Operational Response. Information was not easily or routinely shared amongst these systems or teams and in some instances the same premises or site would be in all three systems.</p> <p>Dynamics has changed the way the Authority approaches risk information. With this new system a premises will only be added once, all activities are then processed from this one place. For example, if Building Safety issue a prohibition notice for a premises this is then made available to all staff including operational colleagues.</p> <p>Dynamics also stores plans, images and evacuation information, which the Risk Information team collect as part of their inspection, to support crews in planning for and responding to an incident.</p>	
In 2020 the Authority established the Risk Information Team. This is a specialist team responsible for collating and assessing information from special risk sites and ensuring site specific risk information is consistent, accurate and available to crews.	
The risk assessment methodology for the Dynamics system has been developed in line with the risk assessment methodology for the Kent Community Risk Registers (KCRR). As such, the levels of risk can be directly compared, allowing joint priorities to be determined. The KCRR and Dynamics are used by the Operational Planning Team to produce a list of exercises that will need to be completed each year.	'Preparedness for a major incident' and 'Risk information' are two of the Internal Audit projects for 2019/20. KMFR December 2020 (Item No: C1)
Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, we developed and implemented a co-ordinated activity to offer reassurance to local residents and ensure that high-rise residential buildings in Kent and Medway are as safe as possible.	Update on the programme of works the Authority established to coordinate all the activities including the response to the findings and recommendations from Phase I of the Grenfell Tower. KMFR December 2020 (Item No: B2)

<p>Following this, we also implemented a plan to undertake a number of high-rise exercises to test local plans and firefighting operations.</p> <p>In 2018, the Authority established the Fires in Buildings Programme; a piece of work to ensure that when we respond to incidents in complex buildings we are trained to the latest standards, consistently select and apply the relevant processes and have all the information and equipment needed to keep our customers and firefighters safe whilst dealing with the incident efficiently.</p>	<p>Announcement of plans to launch a new high rise campaign which builds on the lessons from the Grenfell Inquiry and the Hackitt Review. KMFR February 2020 (Item No: C1)</p> <p>Customer Engagement and Safety update. KMFR February 2020 (Item No: C1)</p>
<p>Our Business Safety Team run a Risk Based Inspection Programme, that targets premises at most risk to use resources as efficiently as possible.</p>	<p>KMFR approve the new Risk-based Inspection Policy. KMFR July 2020 (Item No: B2)</p>
<p>We have worked closely with a number of local authority partners to develop the Better Business for All partnership and the Primary Authority Scheme.</p> <p>These initiatives bring businesses and regulators together in order to reduce the regulatory burden for businesses.</p>	
<p>Our Business Portal is a single location to provide businesses with the information they need to know to stay safe. This includes adapting the approach to building safety in response to the demands and restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic.</p>	
<p>The Authority is an active and leading member in the South East FRS Regional Business Continuity Group.</p>	
<p>2.3 Respond</p> <p>Fire and rescue authorities must make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies within their area and in other areas in line with their mutual aid agreements. Fire and rescue authorities must have effective business continuity arrangements in place in accordance with their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.</p>	
<p>How to we meet these requirements?</p>	<p>Where do we get assurance from?</p>
<p>We have a published Operational Response Strategy, which sets out our approach to emergency response. This is one of the eight supporting strategies of the Customer Safety Plan.</p>	<p>Final update on progress to deliver the Operational Response Strategy in the Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024. KMFR December 2020 (Item No: B2)</p>

	Refreshed Customer Safety Plan, 2020-2024 (incorporating the eight supporting strategies including the Operational Response Strategy). KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B10)
<p>The service plays an active role in the National Operational Learning process and is committed to adopting National Operational Guidance.</p>	<p>Internal Audit of Operational Assurance carried out in 2020 looked at the implementation of National Operational Guidance in the Authority.</p> <p>KMFRA July 2020 (App 1 to Item No: B4)</p>
<p>The Authority has provided a 24/7 on-site emergency response capability to Eurotunnel since the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994. The service is provided under a contract with Eurotunnel to provide the first line of response (FLOR) to any rescue emergency inside the Channel Tunnel.</p> <p>The UK and French FLOR teams regularly work together, undertake joint training and exercises take place annually.</p>	<p>In April 2021, a multi-agency exercise was undertaken at the Channel Tunnel to test the communications networks.</p> <p>The Authority has signed a new seven year contract with Eurotunnel to deliver First Line of Response functions. This represents the longest term contract the Authority have had in the 25 years of working with Eurotunnel.</p>
<p>The Authority works with its French counterparts to provide the second line of response (SLOR) to any emergency event in the Channel Tunnel.</p>	<p>Bi-national exercises are undertaken with the Authority's counterparts in France. The most recent of these was BINAT 30, a joint UK-French exercise in the Channel Tunnel, this took place over the 18 and 19 January 2020.</p> <p>The ability to undertake any further exercises during 2020/21 was curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic. However, this will be reviewed for 2021/22.</p>
<p>The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic led to unprecedented uncertainty, requiring urgent business continuity arrangements to be implemented.</p> <p>The arrangements put in place following the declaration of a major incident in response to the coronavirus pandemic worked extremely well overall, due in large part to the Authority's tried and tested Business Continuity plan</p> <p>Business continuity plans (including recovery plans) are in place for all reasonably foreseeable risks to the Authority. Our plans are designed to enable us to respond effectively to emergencies which may affect the delivery of our core functions.</p>	<p>Pandemic update. KMFRA October 2020 (Item No: C1)</p> <p>Emergency Planning and Contingencies Policy. A copy of this is available on request.</p> <p>A Business Continuity exercise was held in October 2019 enabling an informed review of the Business Continuity plan. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B2)</p> <p>Internal Audit Annual Report, containing summary of audit of Business Continuity Management. KMFRA, July 2020 (App 1 to Item No: B4)</p>

All business continuity plans are validated through exercises (both live and table top) to ensure they are comprehensive, fit for purpose and realistic.	
The Authority participates in a national annual exercise on Business Continuity Awareness Week.	
We conduct risk assessments of locations of higher risk in Kent and Medway, such as places that store large amounts of chemicals.	
<p>The Authority is required to undertake regular operational exercises against the key current risks and threats in Kent and Medway.</p> <p>As part of the planning and preparation for the UK's departure from the EU, an annual exercise was completed in July 2020 and as part of the Authority's continuous improvement, the new principles identified as part of the Integrated Learning and Assurance Model were applied.</p>	<p>Financial update. KMFRA, December 2020 (Item No: B3)</p> <p>Exercise Programme Update. KMFRA, February 2019 (Item No: C1)</p> <p>Throughout 2019/20, the exercises undertaken included live exercises at a 'complex building' (in this case a large school), a regulated industrial site and a power station.</p> <p>In addition to the variety of live exercises that were undertaken, a number of table top exercises were held, including one of a fire in a high-rise and a test and review of organisational and corporate response to the scenarios presented within some of those exercises.</p> <p>These exercises allow us to test our procedures and responses to a variety of events, and ensure a cohesive response whilst being able to maintain our front line emergency response and Service critical back office functions.</p>
<p>In response to the covid-19 pandemic, the multi-agency Strategic Coordination Group declared the coronavirus pandemic a major incident on 24 March 2020. At the meeting of the Authority held on 23 July 2020, Members were updated on the actions taken by the Authority during the early period of the pandemic.</p> <p>Business continuity arrangements were put in place to ensure that KFRS Control functioned as usual and that there were no interruptions to fire cover and operational response.</p>	<p>Pandemic update. KMFRA, October 2020 (Item No: C1)</p>

<p>In the inspection undertaken of fire and rescue services' response to the coronavirus pandemic, HMICFRS stated that the Authority adapted effectively and efficiently to the considerable demands that were imposed upon it by the coronavirus pandemic – moreover it did so while maintaining its day-to-day service and fulfilling all of its statutory duties.</p>	<p>HMICFRS inspection of the Authority's response to covid-19</p>
<p>2.4 Collaboration</p> <p>The Policing and Crime Act 2017 created a statutory duty on fire and rescue authorities, police forces, and ambulance trusts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep collaboration opportunities under review; • notify other emergency services of proposed collaborations that could be in the interests of their mutual efficiency or effectiveness; and • give effect to a proposed collaboration where the proposed parties agree that it would be in the interests of their efficiency or effectiveness and that it does not have an adverse effect on public safety. <p>Fire and rescue authorities must collaborate with other fire and rescue authorities to deliver interoperability (between fire and rescue authorities) and interoperability (with other responders such as other emergency services, wider Category 1 and 2 responders and Local Resilience Forums) in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). Fire and rescue authorities must collaborate with the National Resilience Lead Authority to ensure interoperability is maintained for National Resilience assets.</p>	
<p>How to we meet these requirements?</p>	<p>Where do we get assurance from?</p>
<p>We operate a shared 999 control room with Kent Police. Working in partnership with Kent Police, we implemented the UK's first inter-agency command and control solution, which has delivered significant benefits.</p>	<p>Collaboration Update. KMFR February 2020 (Item No. C1)</p>
<p>Section 13 and 16 Agreements have been signed with all neighbouring fire and rescue authorities.</p>	
<p>We have recently set up a Collaboration team, managed by a Group Manager to increase efficiency and effectiveness of partnership working and to maintain a collaboration tracker</p>	<p>Collaboration Update. KMFR February 2020 (Item No. C1)</p>
<p>We undertake familiarization and training with neighbouring fire and rescue authorities.</p>	
<p>A revised 'Gaining Access' memorandum of understanding has been agreed between the Authority, Kent Police and SECamb, whereby the</p>	

equipment and skills of firefighters can be deployed to assist in gaining entry when other options have been attempted.	
The Authority is part of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) with Kent Police and SECamb. The programme sets out a standard approach to multi-agency working.	
The Authority hosts and manages the Kent Resilience Team (KRT). Part of the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF), the KRT is a multi-agency initiative to transform the delivery of emergency planning services in order to achieve better outcomes for the people of Kent. It does so by improving the effectiveness of the planning, response and recovery from emergencies.	The KRT Annual Report can be made available on request subject to any exclusions as necessary.
We support SECamb by responding to life-threatening medical emergencies when our crews or officers are available to do so.	
We are members of the National Operational Guidance Implementation Forum.	National Operational Guidance Programme
Our Chief Executive is one of the Committee Chairs of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) . The Chief Executive also runs the National Collaborative Procurement Board. Several members of staff are Subject Matter Experts for NFCC working groups.	
To ensure we develop better inter-agency working and to help save public money, we have proactively opened up our premises for use by other agencies, particularly SECamb and Kent Police. SECamb mobilise resources from a number of KFRS owned premises.	
The strength of our partnership working arrangements were evident in the range of actions that were undertaken to support partner agencies during the covid-19 pandemic. The agencies we worked during March 2020 included: Kent County Council, the Kent Resilience Forum, SECamb and the fire and rescue services in the south east region.	The collaborative work that was undertaken in response to covid-19 included: supporting SECamb with the logistics and delivery of PPE to ambulance facilities across Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex and Surrey; making KFRS Fleet Technicians available to assist with ambulance breakdowns, responding to falls in the home; working with SECamb and partner fire services to produce risk assessments, policy documents and a memorandum of understanding to provide KFRS firefighters as drivers

<p>During the second national lockdown (05/11/2020 - 02/12/2020), all of the Authority's statutory duties were maintained.</p> <p>We continued to support our partners with deliveries of PPE for SECAMB and hot meals for customers of Age UK.</p> <p>We sourced 3.5 million items of consumable PPE for the sector nationally during the pandemic</p> <p>During the third national lockdown (06/01/2021 up to the time of writing), the Authority continued to provide a range of support for partners, in particular SECAMB. Firefighters driving ambulances and assisting in the opening of mass vaccination sites in Folkestone, Tonbridge and Gravesend.</p> <p>In February 2021, volunteers from among the Authority's staff (both operational and non-operational) assisted in Operation Barton, a four day surge testing and mass tracing event in Maidstone to identify cases of the South African covid-19 variant.</p>	<p>for ambulances; supporting SECAMB with testing equipment and PPE; and releasing KFRS staff who work part-time for SECAMB to be able to undertake full-time SECAMB duties.</p> <p>Pandemic update. KMFRA December 2020 (Item No: C1)</p> <p>Pandemic update. KMFRA February 2021 (Item No: C1)</p>
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Section 3. National Resilience

3.1 Gap Analysis

Fire and rescue authorities' risk assessments must include an analysis of any gaps between their existing capability and that needed to ensure national resilience. Fire and rescue authorities are required to assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning. To do this effectively, fire and rescue authorities are expected to assess their existing capability and identify any gaps as part of the integrated risk management planning process.

How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
As part of the development of the Safety and Wellbeing Plan, we conduct a comprehensive review of the risk profile across the county. This supporting information is published on our website.	Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2024 update KMFRAs approval of draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan Update 2021. KMFRAs October 2020 (Item No: B4) Safety and Wellbeing Plan update. Outcomes of consultation. KMFRAs February 2021 (Item No: C1) Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2020 KMFRAs approval of draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2020. KMFRAs October 2019 (Item No: B4) Safety and Wellbeing Plan update. Outcomes of consultation. KMFRAs February 2019 (Item No: C1)
We are a key organisation within the Kent Resilience Forum . The KRF is a local resilience forum, one of a number across England, which has been set up to ensure that agencies and organisations plan and work together, to ensure a co-ordinated response to emergencies that could have a significant impact on communities in Kent.	
The National and Kent Community Risk Registers contain hazards and threats identified by government departments and local agencies. The KCRR is based on the national risk register and is a statutory requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.	Kent Community Risk Register

<p>Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) partners are required to assess the risks in their area. KRF partners achieve this by working together to develop the 'Kent Community Risk Register'.</p> <p>The risk register is informed by national guidance and developed locally with partners and subject matter experts. The final register is endorsed by the strategic representatives of all KRF partners.</p>	
<p>The Authority works with partners in the South East and nationally on a number of projects to support national resilience.</p>	<p>Issues regarding this are reported to Members, but it should be recognised that due to the sensitive nature of this area, limited information is detailed in the public domain.</p>
<p>Bi-national exercises are undertaken with the Authority's counterparts in France, Belgium and Holland. However, the coronavirus pandemic prevented the annual joint UK-French exercise in the Channel Tunnel for 2021.</p> <p>Consequently, the most recent of these was the annual joint UK-French exercise in the Channel Tunnel; BINAT 30. This took place between Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th January 2020. It was a casualty-centred exercise that involved moving a large number of casualties from underground to reception centres in both the UK and France, dealing with casualties' welfare and injuries, and arrangements for repatriation of casualties. It also allowed for the testing of the recovery phase following an incident in the Channel Tunnel.</p> <p>Linking in with other agencies such as SECamb, the police, local authority emergency planning teams and the Kent Resilience Forum, BINAT 30 provided a real-time opportunity for responders from both the French and UK agencies to test their joint plans and procedures. This involved a considerable commitment from all of the agencies taking part.</p> <p>The Channel Tunnel Bi-national emergency plan was updated in Sept 2019</p>	
<p>As part of the MIRG EU, the Authority has entered into an agreement with counterparts in France, Holland and Belgium for an agreed response and procedures to incidents in the English Channel.</p>	

<p>The Authority plans for and undertake regular operational exercises against the current risks and threats in Kent and Medway. These test the efficacy of our emergency planning and the use of joint emergency services interoperability principles (JESIP).</p> <p>The scenarios and location of the service level exercises are determined by giving close consideration to risks in the National Risk Register, our multi-agency Kent Community Risk Register and the information the Authority holds relating to specific premises within its risk management system.</p>	<p>Financial update. KMFR December 2020 (Item No: B3)</p> <p>Exercise Programme Update. KMFR February 2019 (Item No: C1)</p> <p>Throughout 2019/20, the exercises undertaken included live exercises at a 'complex building' (in this case a large school), a regulated industrial site and a power station.</p> <p>In addition to the variety of live exercises that were undertaken, a number of table top exercises were held, including one of a fire in a high-rise and a test and review of organisational and corporate response to the scenarios presented within some of those exercises.</p>
<p>3.2 National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF)</p> <p>The NCAF has been designed to provide robust and flexible response arrangements to major emergencies that can be adapted to the nature, scale and requirements of the incident. Fire and rescue authorities must proactively engage with, and support, the NCAF arrangements including the NFCC's lead operational role.</p>	
<p>How to we meet these requirements?</p>	<p>Where do we get assurance from?</p>
<p>We are able to offer resources via the National Resilience Fire Control.</p>	
<p>Kent Fire and Rescue Service maintains a Critical incident Framework (CIF) that ensures we are able to respond to critical and major incidents, and continue to maintain essential services.</p> <p>The Framework ensures that KFRS has suitable management and coordination arrangements in place to respond to such incidents. These include arrangements for categorising and escalating incidents. Within this the links to local, regional and national coordination processes are set out.</p> <p>This includes identifying the need to report 'trigger' incidents into the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) Electronic Support System.</p>	<p>The CIF and Major Incident Plan – reviewed and approved by the Authority's Corporate Management Board in early 2019.</p>
<p>The KFRS procedure for reporting 'trigger' incidents is managed through the KFRS Control Centre. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is held on the control system. This SOP lists the 'trigger' incident types that require reporting to NCAF. A prompt to consider activation of this SOP is</p>	<p>The reporting procedure and SOP held by KFRS Control.</p>

also listed against the incident type within the mobilising system, ensuring that NCAF reporting is carried out at the point at which the incident type is defined and confirmed.	
The CIF arrangements are tested annually as part of the KFRS Strategic Exercise. This includes consideration of NCAF reporting. These exercises are subject to a full and robust debrief and operational assurance process.	A recent example of KFRS utilisation of the ESS for incident reporting involved an accident on the major road network within the Brexit-related "Operation Brock" infrastructure.
Throughout 2020, during the covid-19 pandemic, KFRS made its range of National Resilience Assets available if required.	Regular, daily, contact with the Home Office and the NFCC on the work being undertaken by KFRS in response to the covid-19 pandemic.
3.3 Response to Terrorist Attacks or MTFA Fire and rescue services must be able to respond to the threat of terrorism and be ready to respond to incidents within their areas and across England. Fire and rescue services should also be interoperable to provide operational support across the UK to terrorist events as required.	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
Although exercises were postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, under normal circumstances, the Authority plans and undertakes regular operational exercises throughout the year. These test the efficacy of our emergency planning, the use of joint emergency services interoperability principles (JESIP).	Exercise Programme Update. KMFRA February 2019 (Item No: C1)
The issues raised in the recommendations of the Kerslake Report into the terrorist attack at Manchester Arena on May 2017, are supported by the Authority's plans and activities. For example, we have amended talkgroups on airwaves radios in line with the recommendations of the report.	
Further commentary on this section is withheld due to the sensitivity of the area.	
3.4 National Resilience Assurance Fire and rescue authorities must continue to work collectively and with the Fire and Rescue Strategic Resilience Board and the national resilience lead authority to provide assurance to government that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing national resilience capabilities are fit for purpose and robust; and 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> risks and plans are assessed and any gaps in capability that are needed to ensure national resilience are identified. <p>Fire and rescue authorities with MTFA teams must work with police forces and ambulance trusts to provide tri-service assurance of this capability.</p>	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
Kent leads on the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Fire and Rescue Marine Response Group (FRMR) and the NFCC Operations Co-ordination Group.	<p>Bi-national exercises are undertaken with the Authority's counterparts in France, Belgium and Holland. The most recent of these was BINAT 30, a joint UK-French exercise in the Channel.</p> <p>These will be resumed once the coronavirus pandemic allows.</p>
<p>The Authority hosts and manages the Kent Resilience Team (KRT). The KRT is a multi-agency emergency planning team comprising staff from Kent County Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Kent Police.</p> <p>Its purpose is to transform the delivery of emergency planning services in order to achieve better outcomes for the people of Kent. It does this by improving the effectiveness of the planning for, response to and recovery from emergencies and major incidents.</p>	Kent Resilience Forum
Kent has a variety of National Resilience Assets that are exercised both locally and nationally. Assets include Urban Search & Rescue (USAR), Enhanced Logistics Support (ELS), High Volume Pump (HVP), Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) and various Tactical Advisors (Waste Fires, USAR, DIM)	National Resilience Exercising and Assurance programme (internal document)
All of those premises identified at the county and local level are included in the Authority's recently introduced CRM system known as 'Dynamics' Each premises is assessed by the Risk Information Team (RIT) to determine the potential level of risk it poses to the Authority and the community it serves. Information can then be shared across teams in the Service.	Kent Community Risk Register
As part of the FRMR, the Authority has entered into an agreement with counterparts in France, Holland and Belgium for an agreed response and procedures to incidents in the English Channel.	Regular exercising of response.

In March 2020, during the covid-19 pandemic, KFRS made its range of National Resilience Assets available if required.	Regular, daily, contact with the Home Office and the NFCC on the work being undertaken by KFRS in response to the covid-19 pandemic.
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Section 4. Governance	
4.1 Managing the Fire and Rescue Service/Chief Fire Officer Each fire and rescue authority will appoint an individual – commonly known as a Chief Fire Officer – who has responsibility for managing the fire and rescue service. Each fire and rescue authority must hold this person to account for the exercise of their functions and the functions of persons under their direction and control.	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
Our constitutional and governance documents set out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made, and the rules and procedures governing Authority meetings and decision-taking. These include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kent Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 • Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority Standing Orders • Committee Terms of Reference • Scheme of delegation of powers to the Chief Executive • Code of Corporate Governance 	Scrutiny provided by the Members of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority .
The Authority's Annual Governance Statement , incorporating the Operational Assurance Statement.	Approval by KMFR of the Annual Governance Statement (incorporating the Operational Assurance Statement) 2019/20. KMFR July 2020 (Item No: B6) Previous Annual Governance Statements
Oversight and scrutiny provided by the KMFR Members. Evidenced in the publication of all KMFR meeting agendas, reports and minutes on our website.	Agenda and minutes for Authority and Committee meetings

Approval of request from the Kent PCC to be appointed as a member of the Authority.	<p>Additional level of oversight and scrutiny provided by having the PCC sit on the Authority.</p> <p>Approval by KMFR for the PCC to be appointed as an additional (26th) Member of the Authority. KMFR February 2020 (Item No: B1)</p> <p>Request by the PCC to be appointed as an additional Member of the Authority as soon as legislation permitted. KMFR June 2017 (Item No: B1)</p>
4.2 Documents to be prepared Each FRA is expected to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), Annual statement of assurance, financial plans (a medium term financial strategy, an efficiency plan and a reserves strategy).	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
<p>The first stage in developing the Authority's plans is to consider the long-term aim and objectives. Once these have been assessed and agreed by Members, proposals for changes are drawn up and consulted upon with staff, members of the public, businesses and community groups. This process is conducted alongside the development of the Safety and Wellbeing Plan (formerly referred to as the IRMP within Kent) which sets out proposed changes for consultation.</p> <p>Once agreed by Members, the outcomes of the Safety and Wellbeing Plan are then fed into the Customer Safety Plan. This incorporates the Medium Term Financial Plan and infrastructure programme. The Customer Safety Plan also provides details of the Authority's performance over the previous year, targets for the coming years and an improvement action plan explaining how we intend to achieve these targets. The information in the Customer Safety Plan is updated regularly through the course of the year.</p>	<p>Safety and Wellbeing Plan update 2021/24</p> <p>Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2020</p> <p>Safety and Wellbeing Plan update. Outcomes of consultation. KMFR February 2021 (Item No: C1)</p> <p>Safety and Wellbeing Plan Update 2021-2024. KMFR October 2020 (Item No: B4)</p> <p>KMFR approval of draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2020. KMFR October 2019 (Item No: B4)</p> <p>Supporting Information to the Safety and Wellbeing Plan</p> <p>Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024</p> <p>KMFR approval for the refreshed Customer Safety Plan, 2020-2024. KMFR December 2020 (Item No: B10)</p> <p>Update on progress to deliver the strategies of the Customer Safety Plan. KMFR December 2020 (Item No: B2)</p>
The Authority's Annual Governance Statement (incorporating the Operational Assurance Statement)	Approval by KMFR of the Annual Governance Statement (incorporating the Operational Assurance Statement) 2019/20. KMFR July 2020 (Item No: B6)

	Previous Annual Governance Statements Corporate governance page on Authority's website
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	Approval by KMFA of draft MTFP 2021-25. KMFA February 2021 (Item No: B1)
Each year the Authority publishes an Efficiency Statement . This presents a general overview of the national and local economic environment in which the Authority is operating and the effect of this upon the planning and delivery of services over the medium term. In doing so, the aim is to offer a degree of context about the way we undertake our financial planning, and also to provide an outline of the approaches used to operate as efficiently as possible.	Approval by KMFA of the Efficiency Statement 2020/21. KMFA July 2020 (Item No: B10)
The Reserves Strategy is one of the Authority's three key financial strategies alongside the Capital Strategy and draft Capital Programme, and the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.	Approval by KMFA of the updated Reserves Strategy 2021/22. KMFA February 2021 (Item No: B1)
4.3 National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) The NFCC is the first line of operational advice to central and local government during major incidents. This is outlined within the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF), which fire and rescue services must proactively engage with. The NFCC has a role to drive continuous improvement and development throughout the sector. Fire and rescue services should consult the NFCC for advice and support when developing improvement plans, particularly in response to inspections. The expectation is that fire and rescue services in England engage with the NFCC and, in turn, that the NFCC works to support and represent every service.	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
Through widespread involvement in the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), the Authority plays an active role in sector improvement at the national level. Our Chief Executive is one of the Committee Chairs of the NFCC . The Chief Executive is Chair of the NFCC People Coordination Committee and runs the National Collaborative Procurement Board. She also is part of the Covid Committee and is a member of the CRP Board – as is the Assistant Director, Corporate Services.	

<p>The incoming Director of Operations is taking up a role as Co-lead Officer on the NFCC Environmental, Sustainability and Climate Change work stream, which is part of the NFCC Sector Resources and Improvement Committee. The outgoing Director of Operations chairs the PPE Group of the NFCC Clothing Committee.</p> <p>The Director of Finance and Corporate Services plays a significant role in the Fire Finance network and with the Assistant Director, Corporate Services is reviewing Scheme of Delegations arrangements.</p> <p>The AD, Operational Resilience and Development is the South East Regional Lead for the Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP). He is also Chair of the South of England Emergency Services Board.</p> <p>The Assistant Director, Customer Engagement and Safety sits on the NFCC Dementia group and is also is a member of the Prevention Standards Group (along with the AM Building Safety) and also the Prevention Standards Review Panel. He also deputises for the chair of the NFCC Road Safety Group.</p> <p>The Assistant Director HR is part of the NFCC Recruitment working group.</p> <p>The Area Manager Response is the NFCC lead officer for alternative fuels.</p> <p>The Head of Procurement is the project lead for the National Collaborative Procurement Board and manages the National Procurement Hub.</p> <p>The Head of IT chairs the NFCC IT Managers Group and is the ESN Fire User Group rep.</p> <p>The Education Manager supports the Children and Young People Group, looking at the products from an educational perspective.</p> <p>KFRS Inclusion Officer is technical lead for NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</p>	
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Section 5. Achieving value for money

5.1 Reserves

Sections 31A, 32, 42A and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires billing and precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement. Each fire and rescue authority should publish their reserves strategy on their website, either as part of their medium term financial plan or in a separate reserves strategy document. The information on each reserve should make clear how much of the funding falls into the following three categories:

- a. Funding for planned expenditure on projects and programmes over the period of the current medium term financial plan.
- b. Funding for specific projects and programmes beyond the current planning period.
- c. As a general contingency or resource to meet other expenditure needs held in accordance with sound principles of good financial management (e.g. insurance).

How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
The Authority's Reserves Strategy . This is one of the Authority's three key financial strategies alongside the Capital Strategy and draft Capital Programme, and the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.	Approval by KMFR of the updated Reserves Strategy 2021/22. KMFR February 2021 (Item No: B1)
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	Approval by KMFR of draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2021/22 and draft MTFP 2021-25. KMFR February 2021 (Item No: B1)
The Authority's Financial Strategies	Approval by KMFR of the 10 Year Capital Expenditure Plan for 2021/22 to 2030/31. KMFR February 2021 (App 4 to Item No: B1)

5.2 Commercial Transformation

Each fire and rescue authority must demonstrate that it is achieving value for money for the goods and services it receives. Every fire and rescue authority should look at ways to improve its commercial practices including whether they can aggregate their procurement with other fire and rescue authorities and other local services (e.g. police) to achieve efficiencies.

Fire and rescue authorities must demonstrate and support national and local commercial transformation programmes where appropriate. Each fire and rescue authority should be able to demonstrate full awareness of the objectives to standardise requirements, aggregate demand and manage suppliers of products and services within their commercial arrangements.

Fire and rescue authorities must ensure that their commercial activities, be that the placement of new contracts or the use of existing contracts, is in line with their legal obligations, including but not limited to the Public Contracts Regulations, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and transparency commitments.

How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
<p>We have developed a Commercial and Procurement Strategy, which sets out our approach to buy goods and services in such a way that we deliver value for money on every pound spent with our suppliers, whilst complying with EU Directives and UK Government policy that govern public sector procurement.</p>	<p>Refreshed Customer Safety Plan, 2020-2024. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B10)</p> <p>Update on progress to deliver the Commercial and Procurement Strategy. KMFRA December 2020 (Item No: B2)</p> <p>Update on progress to deliver the Commercial and Procurement Strategy. KMFRA December 2019 (Item No: B2)</p>
<p>Our aim when procuring goods, services or works is to achieve value for money whilst having due regard to propriety and regularity. Contracts are not awarded solely on the basis of the lowest price, but on the basis of the 'Most Economically Advantageous Tender'. In other words, on the basis of the best price and quality score achieved by a supplier under established scoring guidelines.</p>	<p>Progress on procurement projects is reported into the Corporate Portfolio Board and all relevant programme and project boards. This applies to both local and collaborative projects.</p>
<p>Under the National Fire Commercial Transformation Programme, all national collaboration projects must report into the Strategic Commercial Board. The Board is chaired by the Authority's Chief Executive and is made up of national sponsors at chief level and category leads. The Board also has an independent assurance member from Police and representation from the Home Office Commercial Directorate, representing police and fire.</p>	<p>KMFRA approval for amended Procurement Policy. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B2)</p>
<p>Category management is now embedded within the organisation, with a focus on Facilities Management and Construction, Information Communications Technology, Ops Equipment, and Fleet and Professional Services. This approach has enabled a cross-functional approach with the respective business areas which has ensured that synergies across the organisation are considered for all procurement decisions, thereby giving greater transparency on aggregated spend. We are also able to work closely with our Police partners in Kent, to look at synergies across the categories and join up wherever feasible to do so. Since 2018/19, the team has facilitated the business to deliver procurement savings of £1.5m, tracked and recorded against the Cabinet</p>	

<p>Office savings methodology, which is endorsed by the Home Office for police and fire.</p> <p>With a lead role on commercial reform as the National Procurement Hub, we are representing UKFRS on the consultation for legislation changes, including Modern Slavery, National Security Investments Bill and the Brexit Green Paper.</p> <p>Much has been delivered for the Sector for clothing and PPE. The category has grown significantly, and as such, with over £18m annual spend, now has a dedicated Category Lead. Covid-19 has confirmed the importance of the National Procurement Hub and, since the first lockdown, the hub has coordinated over 3.5 million units of consumable covid PPE to the sector and local resilience forums across the UK. In addition, nationally, we now have over 33,000 wearers of structural PPE, manufactured to increased quality and protective requirements, and so far saving the UK fire and rescue services over £145k. By the end of July 2021, we shall also have over 13,500 wearers of national workwear, following the successful launch of the new agreement, which is tracking at approximately 20% less than previous spend levels. Finally, we are now live with a procurement for a national arrangement for specialist PPE, with an estimated spend of £98m over an eight year period.</p>	
<p>We have led on the development of the collaborative framework for firefighters' Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This collaborative approach is more efficient and offers greater savings opportunities compared to the old approach. Currently 22 fire services are signed up to the New Collaborative PPE Project.</p>	<p>Commercial and Procurement Update. KMFRA February 2020 (Item No: C1)</p>
<p>All public agencies with a gross revenue budget of greater than £38m are required to publish an annual Transparency in Supply Chains Statement.</p> <p>In response, the Authority has published a Modern Slavery Policy. This sets out the Authority's zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery, human trafficking and all forms of servitude and forced and compulsory labour in all our own business and relationships, and in any of our supply chains.</p>	<p>KMFRA approval for Modern Slavery Policy. KMFRA February 2021 (Item No: B3)</p>

A statement on the performance of the Authority in meeting the policy will be brought annually to Members.	
Our commitment to achieving value for money is articulated in the Efficiency Statement . This presents a general overview of the way we undertake our financial planning and provides an outline of the approaches used by us to operate as efficiently as possible.	KMFR A approval for the Efficiency Statement for 2020/21. KMFR A July 2020 (Item No: B10)
5.3 Research and Development Fire and rescue authorities should engage with national research and development programmes, including those overseen by the NFCC, unless there is a good reason not to.	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
<p>We have a dedicated research and development resource in the Customer Experience and Behaviour Change Team who support the development and improvement of services within Community Safety and Building Safety.</p> <p>A key function is to ensure all of our prevention and protection interventions are underpinned by evidence through undertaking research and evaluation.</p>	<p>Our approach to research and development is set out in our Community Safety Strategy.</p> <p>Update on progress to deliver the Community Safety Strategy. KMFR A December 2020 (Item No: B2)</p>
<p>The Customer Experience and Behaviour Change Team are currently supporting a number of corporate projects and initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Focus Development • Fire as a Health Asset • Primary Authority Scheme • Better Business for All • Review of Safe and Well 	<p>Publication of research undertaken by the Authority in peer reviewed scientific journals including Fire and Materials, Safety Science, and the International Journal of Emergency Services.</p>
<p>We are undertaking a greater level of research and using a social marketing approach to understand people's behaviours and motivations to ensure we can be effective.</p> <p>We have introduced a new framework for evaluation and we are increasingly using the framework to inform future initiatives. We are also</p>	KFRS evaluation framework (Annex 2, Community Safety Strategy)

investigating how we can measure social return on investment to ensure our interventions are both efficient and effective.	
<p>We research behaviour in fires in the home to tailor our customer safety activities and improve the advice we give to people about staying safe. This also supports operational training and emergency call management.</p> <p>The Authority sponsored world-leading doctoral research on human behaviour in dwelling fires (Towards and Comprehensive Understanding of Human Behaviour in Dwelling Fires).</p>	<p>The Authority's published findings of its human behaviour research</p> <p>British Library EThOS e-theses online service</p>
5.4 Trading Fire and rescue authorities have the power to trade and make a profit but they must ensure that their commercial activities are performed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), the Local Government Order 2009 and the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970. Fire and rescue authorities must also ensure that such commercial activities are exercised through a company within the meaning of Part 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
The Authority does not have a trading arm and has no plans to engage in such activity.	KMFRAs approval for the 'Charing Policy'. KMFRAs, July 2020 (Item No: B2)

Section 6. Workforce

6.1 People Strategy

Each fire and rescue authority should have in place a people strategy that has been designed in collaboration with the workforce.

How to we meet these requirements?

Our [People Strategy](#) (one of the eight supporting strategies of the Customer and Corporate Plan) sets out how we develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Where do we get assurance from?

[KMFRAs approval for the refreshed Customer Safety Plan including People Strategy, 2020-2024. KMFRAs, July 2020 \(Item No: B10\)](#)

6.2 Professional Standards

To enhance professionalism of fire and rescue services, a coherent and comprehensive set of professional standards across all areas of fire and rescue services' work will be developed, drawing on existing standards where appropriate. The development of new standards will be on an ongoing basis.	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
<p>At the time of writing the Fire Standards Board have published the following four standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Response Driver Training Fire Standard • Operational Response (Preparedness, Competence and Learning) Fire Standard • Code of Ethics Fire Standard • Community Risk Management Planning Fire Standard <p>Within KFRS there already exists a well-established culture of professional standards, which is underpinned by and codified in a small number of key documents. The conduct of staff is taken very seriously and we have a Code of Conduct which clearly sets out the standards of ethical and professional behaviour we expect.</p> <p>We place the utmost importance on holding ourselves to high standards of behaviour and integrity as embodied in the seven (Nolan) principles of public life: 1. Selflessness; 2. Integrity; 3. Objectivity; 4. Accountability; 5. Openness; 6. Honesty; 7. Leadership.</p>	<p>During the consultation period, the Authority has been an active participant and engaged with and responded to each of the consultations on the proposed fire standards.</p> <p>As and when consultation opens on additional standards, the Authority will continue to engage actively with the process.</p> <p>Following the publication of the first four standards, the Authority undertook a high level gap analysis of its position against each of the published fire standards.</p> <p>This identified that the Authority was compliant with the majority of the key areas of each of the four standards.</p> <p>KFRS Code of Conduct (a copy of this is available on request)</p> <p>All employees are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the spirit as well as the detail of the code of conduct and to always maintain the highest standards of integrity when conducting the Authority's business.</p>
Our customer promise sets out what the public are entitled to expect from us, and what we expect from our staff. It is our commitment to provide the public with an assured level of service. We want to ensure that the public have trust and confidence in the services we provide.	Our Customer Promise Customer Experience and Behaviour Change Update. KMFRS February 2021 (Item No: C1)
We want to ensure that KFRS remains a fulfilling, supportive and enjoyable place to work. To underpin this we also have an internal customer promise between colleagues.	"Our 'Promise to Each Other' as we share our working lives together" (a copy of this is available on request)
When undertaking the business of the Authority, all of the Authority's Members are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the	Members' Code of Conduct

<p>Authority's Code of Conduct for Members. The Authority adopted a new Code of Conduct with effect from 1 July 2012 together with detailed Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints.</p> <p>The Members' Code of Conduct is set to be reviewed in 2021/22.</p>	<p>Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints</p> <p>No complaints alleging that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct have been made to the Authority during the past year.</p> <p>Annual Report on Members' Standards and Allowances. KMFRA October 2020 (Item No: C1)</p>
<p>Feedback is collected from our customers and reported to KMFRA. The feedback shows that levels of complaints are extremely low.</p>	<p>Freedom of Information and Annual Customer Feedback Update. KMFRA October 2019 (Item No: C1)</p>
<p>6.3 Fitness Principles</p> <p>Fire and rescue authorities have an important role in helping to ensure their firefighters remain fit and are supported in remaining in employment. Each fire and rescue authority must comply with the fitness principles set out at Annex C.</p>	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
<p>The Authority's sets out the fitness standards required and the process by which this is monitored and tested for operational personnel.</p>	<p>A copy of the Health and Wellbeing Guidance is available on request.</p> <p>All operational staff are subject to testing annually and support given to anyone falling below the required fitness level.</p>
<p>The Wellbeing Zone provides a wide range of resources for colleagues.</p>	<p>Monitoring of occupational health activity.</p>
<p>The Capability Regulations provide for a process of adjustment and redeployment where an individual cannot maintain or regain the required fitness level.</p>	<p>A copy of the Capability Regulations are available on request. A number of colleagues have already been redeployed under this policy.</p>
<p>We have a number of Physical Training Instructors on the establishment, coordinated by a full time fitness advisor. The working day is structured to allow one hour per day fitness training for all operational personnel. Gyms or fitness equipment is provided on all stations.</p>	
<p>In addition to physical health, the Authority has a strong focus on actively supporting the mental well-being of staff. KFRS takes the issue of mental health very seriously, particularly as in the course of their work, firefighters can be exposed to potentially distressing scenes.</p>	<p>The Authority has signed up to the Government's Workplace Wellbeing Charter.</p> <p>Great importance is placed on supporting colleagues with their physical and mental wellbeing and we have developed a culture which actively</p>

<p>We have in place all the appropriate support arrangements, and referral systems into our occupational health provider if anyone (irrespective of whether operational staff or corporate staff) is displaying signs of any form of mental health issue.</p>	<p>challenges the stigma around mental health and the associated barriers to seeking help and support for mental well-being.</p> <p>In 2018, we introduced the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The EAP helpline is available 24 hours a day, throughout the year and offers access to trained counsellors will offer help and support in a professional, friendly and non-judgmental manner.</p> <p>This is supplemented by a network of Wellbeing Champions. These are staff volunteers who provide a confidential service to support the physical and mental wellbeing of colleagues by discussing options and signposting to available resources.</p> <p>All staff have completed mandatory online training in psychological support and wellbeing and managers have received a mental health first aid training course.</p> <p>The past year has seen the introduction of 24/7 Wellbeing Support Officers to provide out of hours support to all staff.</p> <p>In addition, we have put in place wellbeing support for front facing staff who have regular exposure to emotionally demanding situations, examples include the Safe and Well Officers and the Designated Safeguarding Officers. We have also continued to roll out mental health first aid training, so that there are now 70 Mental Health First Aiders within the Service.</p> <p>KFRS also hosts resilience and wellbeing conferences to raise awareness of mental health issues. Previous years have covered resilience at work, managing stress, suicide prevention awareness (including commitment to the stop suicide pledge), alcohol and suicide, self-harm and PTSD.</p>
<p>6.4 Re-engagement of Senior Officers Fire and rescue authorities must not re-appoint principal fire officers after retirement to their previous, or a similar, post save for in exceptional circumstances when such a decision is necessary in the interests of public safety. Any such appointment must be transparent, justifiable and time limited.</p>	
<p>How to we meet these requirements?</p>	<p>Where do we get assurance from?</p>

<p>The Authority responded to the Government's consultation on the draft Fire and Rescue National Framework and stated its commitment to not re-appointing principal fire officers after retirement to their previous or a similar post.</p>	<p>KMFRA oversight of senior appointments through the Senior officer Appointment and Conditions Committee.</p>
<p>When an employee retires from the Authority, they may choose to set themselves up as a consultant. On occasions there has been a need to reengage that individual for their specific expertise and skills.</p> <p>If this option is taken up, then a taxation test called IR35 needs to be applied. If the consultant meets the thresholds for IR35 to apply, meaning that the consultant is effectively an employee, it is officers' recommendation that abatement rules should also then be applied.</p>	<p>Section of Pay Policy Statement covering the re-engagement of former employees. KMFRA February 2021 (Item No: B3)</p> <p>Approval that abatement will be applied where ex-employees return to the Authority as consultants and the "IR35" rule applies. KMFRA April 2019 (Item No: B5)</p>

Section 7. Inspection, intervention and accountability

7.1 Inspection

All fire and rescue authorities must cooperate with the inspectorate and its inspectors to enable them to deliver their statutory function. This includes providing relevant data and information to inform inspections. The Home Office and HMICFRS will work together to align data and information collections where possible to avoid duplication. Fire and rescue authorities must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS and – if recommendations are made – prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned.

How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
<p>In January 2021 HMICFRS published the results of its inspection of the Authority's response to the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>HMICFRS praised the Authority's ability to meet the significant demands placed on it by the pandemic whilst maintaining its statutory duties and acting as the national lead for PPE distribution.</p> <p>Consequently, the arrangements and systems of control employed by the Authority have been shown to be robust and effective, which have allowed it to adapt to the significant challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.</p>	<p>HMICFRS COVID-19 inspection: Kent Fire and Rescue Service</p>

<p>In 2019 the Authority received its first inspection by HMICFRS. At the start of this in January 2019, the Chief Executive provided representatives of HMICFRS with a strategic briefing, highlighting the work the Authority has progressed over the last ten years, and the plans for the future.</p> <p>This was followed up by HMICFRS with an intensive programme of visits and interviews between 14 and 18 January involving ten inspectors, and overall around 15% of the total workforce being visited in some capacity across the whole of the process.</p>	
<p>On 20/06/2019 HMICFRS published the results of its first inspection of the Authority. This rated KFRS as 'Good' across the three inspection pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People.</p> <p>Of the 45 FRAs which were inspected in 2018/19, the Authority is one of only 16 to have been awarded 'good' in all three pillars.</p> <p>The Inspectorate identified several areas where the Authority was showing notably good practice. Particular highlights that were identified in the report include the Authority's ability to respond to incidents effectively and to spend public money appropriately and responsibly.</p> <p>The report also found that the Authority offers 'excellent wellbeing support' for staff, noting a culture of 'trust and empowerment'.</p>	<p>HMICFRS inspection report of KFRS, which rated the Authority as 'Good' across all three pillars (published 20/06/2019)</p> <p>In the HMICFRS press release following their inspection of KFRS, HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Zoë Billingham stated:</p> <p><i>"I am pleased that we have rated Kent Fire and Rescue Service as 'good' across all three areas of our inspection, in terms of its efficiency, effectiveness and the way it looks after its staff. This is a modern and innovative fire service that is prepared to find new ways of doing things.</i></p> <p><i>Many other fire and rescue services could learn from the example it sets. The service performs well in one of its primary duties: responding to fires and other emergencies. We found good collaboration with other local emergency services, including the ambulance service and the police, which improves the service given to the people of Kent."</i></p>
<p>The Inspectorate did not identify any 'causes of concern' (the most serious level) and identified just eight areas for improvement (the least serious level). The breakdown of these eight areas of improvement across the three pillars is as follows: six in the Effectiveness pillar; and one each in the Efficiency and People pillars.</p>	
<p>Following the inspection by HMICFRS, the Authority prepared an action plan that addresses each of the eight areas for improvement. Although</p>	<p>KFRS HMICFRS Action Plan. KMFRA October 2019 (Item No: C1)</p>

there is no requirement placed on the Authority to do this, the action plan has been implemented and is currently underway.	
<p>On 14/01/2020, HMICFRS published their first annual report of their assessment of the state of the fire and rescue sector in England, based on the inspections of the 45 fire and rescue services carried out between June 2018 and August 2019.</p> <p>The Authority received two direct mentions in the report. The first is a positive mention of the process of staff engagement. The second praises the Authority for mainstreaming inclusion into everyday business.</p>	<p>State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019, HMICFRS</p> <p>Summary of HMICFRS 'State of the Fire and Rescue Service' report. KMFRA February 2020 (Item No: C1)</p>
As part of its commitment to the inspection process, the Authority responded to the HMICFRS consultation on the Proposed Fire and Rescue Services Inspection Programme and Framework 2020/21 (issued 24/10/2019).	Authority's response to the Proposed Fire and Rescue Services Inspection Programme and Framework 2020/21. KMFRA December 2019 (Item No: C1)
<p>7.2 Intervention</p> <p>Section 22 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 gives powers to the Secretary of State to intervene should a fire and rescue authority fail, or be likely to fail, to act in accordance with this Framework.</p>	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
The Authority is not in this position, therefore this section is not relevant in this context.	N/A
<p>7.3 Accountability</p> <p>Fire and rescue authorities are expected to have governance and accountability arrangements in place covering issues such as financial management and transparency, complaints and discipline arrangements, and compliance with the seven principles of public life.</p> <p>In demonstrating their accountability to communities for the service they provide, fire and rescue authorities need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be transparent and accountable to their communities for their decisions and actions; • provide the opportunity for communities to help to plan their local service through effective consultation and involvement; and • have scrutiny arrangements in place that reflect the high standard communities expect for an important public safety service. 	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?

<p>Our governance documents set out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made, and the rules and procedures governing Authority meetings and decision-taking. This contains the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kent Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 • Standing orders • Committee Terms of Reference • Members' code of conduct • Scheme of delegation of powers to the Chief Executive • Convention on Member and officer relations • Corporate governance 	<p>KMFRA approval for the suite of governance documents.</p>
<p>We publish a full range of financial information about the Authority. This includes, but is not limited to, the statement of accounts, medium term financial plan, monthly spend reports and 10 year capital strategy.</p>	<p>Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25</p> <p>Approval by KMFRA of draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2021/22 and draft MTFP 2021-25. KMFRA February 2021 (Item No: B1)</p> <p>Approval by KMFRA of draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2020/21 and draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2020-24. KMFRA February 2020 (Item No: B2)</p> <p>Approval by KMFRA of the 10 Year Capital Expenditure Plan for 2021/22 to 2030/31. KMFRA February 2021 (Appendix 4 to Item No: B1)</p> <p>Financial update for 2020/21. KMFRA December 2020 (Item No: B3)</p> <p>Budget Outturn Report 2019/20 and Financial Update for 2020/21. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B3)</p> <p>External Auditor's Findings Report 2019/20. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B7)</p> <p>Internal Audit Mid-Year Progress Report (including audit of Financial Strategies). KMFRA December 2019 (Item No: C1)</p>
<p>The Authority publishes a Safety and Wellbeing Plan in order to consult on the services required to meet future needs. The priorities within this are developed following an assessment of risks across the county.</p>	<p>Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2024 update</p> <p>Safety and Wellbeing Plan update. Outcomes of consultation. KMFRA February 2021 (Item No: C1)</p>

	KMFRAs approval of draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan Update 2021. KMFRAs October 2020 (Item No: B4)
<p>Following the publication of updated guidance by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), the Authority published a revised Code of Corporate Governance in November 2016. 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.</p> <p>The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance was reviewed, updated and subsequently approved in July 2020 as part of both a general refresh and also to give consideration to the requirements of the CIPFA Financial Management Code 2020.</p> <p>The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance is based upon the 'CIPFA Principles for Good Governance in the Public Sector'. This adopts the structure of the seven CIPFA and links them to the work of the Authority.</p>	<p>KMFRAs approval for the revised Code of Corporate Governance. KMFRAs July 2020 (Item No: B2)</p> <p>Code of Corporate Governance. Approved by KMFRAs General Purposes Committee. KMFRAs November 2016 (Item No: B3)</p>
<p>We place the utmost importance on holding ourselves to high standards of behaviour and integrity as embodied in the seven (Nolan) principles of public life: 1. Selflessness; 2. Integrity; 3. Objectivity; 4. Accountability; 5. Openness; 6. Honesty; 7. Leadership. It is aligned to the national ethical framework for fire and rescue authorities.</p>	<p>Members' Code of Conduct</p> <p>KFRS Code of Conduct for employees (a copy of this is available on request)</p>
All KMFRAs meeting agendas, reports and minutes are published on the Authority's website.	Oversight and approval from the Members of the Authority.
<p>Information about how to offer feedback and make complaints is published on the website.</p> <p>We also regularly review and report on complaints and other feedback received.</p>	<p>Feedback and Allegations Policy</p> <p>Freedom of information and annual customer feedback update. KMFRAs October 2020 (Item No: C1)</p>

The Authority is statutorily obliged to have an annual financial audit conducted by an external audit firm. The results of which are presented to KMFRA and published on the website.	External auditor's audit findings report for 2019/20. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B7)
7.4 Transparency Each fire and rescue authority must comply with their statutory transparency requirements. The nature of the requirements is dependent on the legal basis of the authority; for example, combined fire and rescue authorities would be subject to the Local Authority Transparency Code 2015 while PCC FRAs must comply with requirements under section 11 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) Order 2011. All fire and rescue authorities should therefore publish certain information, including: senior salaries; register of interests; staffing; income and expenditure; property; rights and liabilities; and decisions of significant public interest. Fire and rescue authorities must make their communities aware of how they can access data and information on their performance.	
How to we meet these requirements?	Where do we get assurance from?
The Authority has a Transparency Policy	Update for KMFRA on amendment to Transparency Policy. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B2)
We have a Publication and Retention Scheme , which is available to the public.	KMFRA approval for revisions to Publication and Retention Scheme. KMFRA December 2019 (Item No: B4)
The Authority has a Data Protection and Information Security Policy	Update to Data Protection and Information Security Policy. KMFRA December 2019 (Item No: B4)
The Authority's Freedom of Information Policy, Subject Access Request Policy and associated guidance are published on the website.	Update for KMFRA on amendment to the Freedom of Information Policy. KMFRA July 2020 (Item No: B2)
Following the enactment of the GDPR in May 2018, (supplemented by the Data Protection Act 2018), an overall organisation-wide privacy statement was published. This is supported by a full set of privacy notices (currently 33 in total).	Privacy section of our website
We meet the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 , plus the majority of the criteria recommended for publication.	Transparency reports of all transactions over £250 are regularly published on the website. The Authority's contracts register is published on the website

	The Authority publishes on its website all required elements of the Government's transparency agenda.
The Authority meets the requirements of the 'Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017'	Publication of trade union facility time information on the website
We publish a register of all property and land currently owned by the Authority .	
We publish a list of all fire stations in Kent and Medway .	
We publish a list of our vehicle fleet .	
We publish information on senior officers' pay .	
We report our customers' feedback and freedom of information requests to Members. We are compliant with the additional requirements of the 2018 revised Code of Practice for Freedom on Information requests.	Freedom of Information Update. KMFRA February 2021 (Item No: C1) Freedom of Information and Annual Customer Feedback Update. KMFRA October 2020 (Item No: C1)
We have a Community Right to Challenge Policy which forms part of the government's Open Public Services agenda.	Update for KMFRA on the Community Right to Challenge policy. KMFRA April 2019 (Item No: B4)

Joint Statement by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Executive

We acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring the proper governance of the Authority's affairs and will ensure that sufficient resources are dedicated to ensuring that key controls and processes are implemented, maintained and monitored for effectiveness. We confirm that this Statement represents an honest and full assessment of the levels of assurance we have obtained following the assessment process as described above.

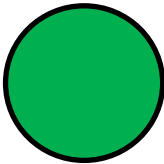
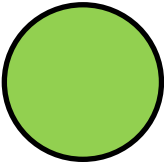
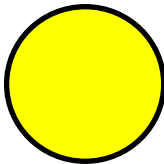
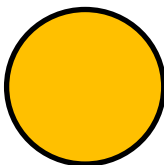
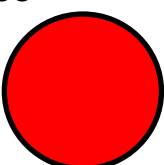
Nick Chard

Chair, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Date: 2021

Ann Millington

Chief Executive, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Assurance level	Definition of assurance levels
High 	<p>Internal control, Governance and the management of risk are at a high standard. The arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal controls are extremely well designed and applied effectively. Processes are robust and well-established. There is a sound system of control operating effectively and consistently applied to achieve service/system objectives. There are examples of best practice. No significant weaknesses have been identified.</p>
Substantial 	<p>Internal Control, Governance and management of risk are sound overall. The arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal controls are largely suitably designed and applied effectively. Whilst there is a largely sound system of controls there are few matters requiring attention. These do not have a significant impact on residual risk exposure but need to be addressed within a reasonable timescale.</p>
Adequate 	<p>Internal control, Governance and management of risk is adequate overall however, there were areas of concern identified where elements of residual risk or weakness with some of the controls may put some of the system objectives at risk. There are some significant matters that require management attention with moderate impact on residual risk exposure until resolved.</p>
Limited 	<p>Internal Control, Governance and the management of risk are inadequate and result in an unacceptable level of residual risk. Effective controls are not in place to meet all the system/service objectives and/or controls are not being consistently applied. Certain weaknesses require immediate management attention as there is a high risk that objectives will not be achieved.</p>
No Assurance 	<p>Internal Control, Governance and management of risk is poor. For many risk areas there are significant gaps in the procedures and controls. Due to the absence of effective controls and procedures no reliance can be placed on their operation. Immediate action is required to address the whole control framework before serious issues are realised in this area with high impact on residual risk exposure until resolved.</p>

By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021

Subject: EXTERNAL AUDITORS AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT FOR 2020/21

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

The reports' main purpose is to present the External Auditor's Audit Findings Report in relation to the 2020/21 financial year, in accordance with the requirements of the International Standard on Auditing (UK and Ireland) 260. The External Auditor's report is attached at **Appendix 1** for Members' information and consideration. It is important that Members consider this report prior to reviewing the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 as it highlights the findings that the External Auditors wish to raise having nearly concluded their audit. The External Auditors will attend the meeting to present their report.

The report also provides a response received from the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) with regard to the increased fee request from the External Auditors, for the 2019/20 audit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Consider the matters raised in the Audit Findings Report for 2020/21 (paragraphs 1 to 4 and **Appendix 1** refer);
2. Note the content of the letter from the Public Sector Audit Appointments (paragraphs 5 to 7 and **Appendix 2** refer).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Director, Finance and Corporate Services - Alison Kilpatrick
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext 8262
EMAIL: alison.kilpatrick@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Audit Findings Report

1. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on all public sector authorities, in a variety of ways. To help alleviate some of these pressures the Accounts and Audit Regulations were amended, to reflect the extended timeframe for the closure of accounts, moving the requirement for Members of the Authority to approve the accounts by no later than the 31 July to the 30 September 2021.
2. Having now virtually concluded the audit of the accounts for 2020/21, the External Auditors' Audit Findings Report for 2020/21 is attached at **Appendix 1**. This report provides a summary of the work that has been carried out by the External Auditors in relation to the financial year 2020/21 and highlights an overview of their audit findings. It also details the assessment that they expect to give having assessed the Accounts for 2020/21.
3. However, at the time of drafting this report, there are still several areas that are yet to be concluded in their review, and these are detailed on page 3 of **Appendix 1**. As External Audit will present the Audit Findings to the Authority meeting, they will update Members on their findings in relation to these remaining issues.
4. In discharging the External Auditors' statutory responsibility to those charged with governance, the report highlights the following key points: -
 - (a) The External Auditors, subject to completing the outstanding work, expect to issue an unmodified audit report in respect of the Financial Statements for 2020/21 (**Appendix 1**, page 3);
 - (b) It is pleasing to note that the External Auditors, have not identified any material adjustments that necessitated amendments to the financial statements at this stage, and have commented that the financial statements provided for audit were produced to a very high standard, with strong working paper trails. They also acknowledge the increased pressure the team were under during these unprecedented times. (**Appendix 1**, page 3 and 5);
 - (c) Members may recall in the Financial Governance report presented at the February 2021 Authority meeting, that the External Auditors Code of Audit Practice has been updated and one of the biggest areas of change is in relation to Value for Money. There is now a new set of requirements for External Auditors to assess against to ensure that the Authority has proper arrangements for financial sustainability, governance and securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources. Audit work in relation to this is expected to be undertaken during the summer months and the Auditors expect to issue their Auditor's Annual Report by 30 September 2021. (**Appendix 1**, page 4 and 15).

Audit Fees

5. Members will recall that at the December Authority meeting it was agreed that the Director, Finance and Corporate Services would challenge the £10,500 increase in Audit fees above those agreed by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the 2019/20 audit (base fee of £27,418).
6. The PSAA have subsequently reviewed the work undertaken by the External Audit team and concluded that £10,000 of the increased charge should be upheld. A copy of the letter received from PSAA is attached at **Appendix 2** for Members information and it highlights the justification for the increased fee and the rationale applied in reviewing the proposed increase. Key considerations have been the increased requirements by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) on Auditors particularly around testing on valuations of property plant and equipment and pensions, the impact of COVID 19 on the audit of the financial statements and the additional time required to undertake the audit remotely.
7. They did, however, highlight that the Authority's fee increase was at the lower end of the spectrum and this was due to the fact that the Authority's Finance team were well prepared for the audit. It was highlighted that other audited bodies are seeing higher increases in fees due to accounts quality and preparation issues, unresolved and/or complex technical issues or the need to undertake additional work on arrangements for achieving Value for Money.
8. The Audit fee for the work in relation to the 2020/21 financial year is proposed to be £43,418, some £16k in addition to the base fee. However, this will be discussed with External Audit and subsequently the PSAA once the audit review work has been completed for 2020/21.

Summary

9. In summary, despite the unprecedented challenges that this pandemic has created, the Finance Team and the External Auditors have worked well together during the whole closedown process. All work was successfully completed remotely by both parties and we are appreciative of the timely turnaround of information by the External Auditors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. Members are requested to:
 - 10.1 Consider the matters raised in the annual Audit Findings Report for 2020/21 (paragraphs 1 to 4 and **Appendix 1** refer);
 - 10.2 Note the content of the letter from the Public Sector Audit Appointments (paragraphs 5 to 7 and **Appendix 2** refer).

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The Audit Findings for Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Year ended 31 March 2021

July 2021



Contents



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Section

1. Headlines
2. Financial statements
3. Value for money arrangements
4. Independence and ethics

Appendices

- A. Audit adjustments
- B. Fees

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The contents of this report relate only to the matters which have come to our attention, which we believe need to be reported to you as part of our audit planning process. It is not a comprehensive record of all the relevant matters, which may be subject to change, and in particular we cannot be held responsible to you for reporting all of the risks which may affect the Authority or all weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. 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.

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1. Headlines

This table summarises the key findings and other matters arising from the statutory audit of Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and the preparation of the Authority’s financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 for those charged with governance.

Financial Statements	
<p>Under International Standards of Audit (UK) (ISAs) and the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to report whether, in our opinion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">the Authority’s financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and of the income and expenditure for the year; andhave been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting and prepared in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.We are also required to report whether other information published together with the audited financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and the Narrative Report) is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.	<p>The findings from our financial statements work are summarised at Section 2.</p> <p>Our work is substantially complete. The financial statements provided for audit were produced to a very high standard, with strong working paper trails. We have not identified any adjusted or unadjusted misstatements to the primary statements. We have agreed a number of minor amendments to disclosure notes.</p> <p>Our audit opinion is subject to finalisation of work in the following areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">completion of our work to review the Authority’s net pension liability. This will also require completion of work by the external auditor of the Kent Pension Fund.completion of work to review the assumptions used by the Authority’s external valuer in the revaluation of Property Plant and Equipment (PPE);completion of journals testing;completion of audit review and quality control procedures;review of a final set of the financial statements; andobtaining a management letter of representation. <p>We have concluded that the other information to be published with the financial statements is consistent with our knowledge of the Authority and the financial statements we have audited.</p> <p>Subject to the completion of outstanding work we anticipate issuing an unmodified audit report.</p>

1. Headlines

Value for Money (VFM) arrangements

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to consider whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Auditors are now required to report in more detail on the Authority's overall arrangements, as well as key recommendations on any significant weaknesses in arrangements identified during the audit.

Auditors are required to report their commentary on the Authority's arrangements under the following specified criteria:

- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- Financial sustainability; and
- Governance

We have not yet completed all of our VFM work and so are not in a position to issue our Auditor's Annual Report. We expect to issue our Auditor's Annual Report by 30 September 2021. This is in line with the deadline specified in the Auditor Guidance issued by the National Audit Office.

Statutory duties

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ('the Act') also requires us to:

- report to you if we have applied any of the additional powers and duties ascribed to us under the Act; and
- to certify the closure of the audit.

We have not exercised any of our additional statutory powers or duties.

We have completed the majority of work under the Code. We expect to certify the completion of the audit upon the completion of our work on the Authority's VFM arrangements.

Significant Matters

We did not encounter any significant difficulties or identify any significant matters arising during our audit.

2. Financial Statements

Overview of the scope of our audit

This Audit Findings Report presents the observations arising from the audit that are significant to the responsibility of those charged with governance to oversee the financial reporting process, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK) 260 and the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'). Its contents have been discussed with management.

As auditor we are responsible for performing the audit, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and the Code, which is directed towards forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements.

Audit approach

Our audit approach was based on a thorough understanding of the Authority's business and is risk based, and in particular included:

- An evaluation of the Authority's internal controls environment, including its IT systems and controls;
- Substantive testing on significant transactions and material account balances, including the procedures outlined in this report in relation to the key audit risks

Conclusion

We have substantially completed our audit of your financial statements. Subject to the finalisation of outstanding work we anticipate issuing an unmodified audit report.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the assistance provided by the finance team and other staff amidst the pressure they were under during these unprecedented times.

2. Financial Statements



Our approach to materiality

The concept of materiality is fundamental to the preparation of the financial statements and the audit process and applies not only to the monetary misstatements but also to disclosure requirements and adherence to acceptable accounting practice and applicable law.

In our audit plan we reported a materiality level of £1.9m. Based on the total expenditure reported in the draft financial statements we updated our materiality to £1.8m. We applied a lower materiality of £50,000 for our work on the note relating to officers' remuneration.

	Authority Amount (£)	Qualitative factors considered
Materiality for the financial statements	1,800,000	This is approximately 2% of gross revenue expenditure.
Performance materiality	1,350,000	Calculated as 75% of headline materiality. This is a measure used in audit testing based upon our assessment of the likelihood of a material misstatement in the financial statements.
Trivial matters	90,000	Calculated as 5% of materiality.
Materiality for disclosures relating to Officers' remuneration	50,000	Additional inherent sensitivity around such disclosures.

2. Financial Statements - Significant risks

Significant risks are defined by ISAs (UK) as risks that, in the judgement of the auditor, require special audit consideration. In identifying risks, audit teams consider the nature of the risk, the potential magnitude of misstatement, and its likelihood. Significant risks are those risks that have a higher risk of material misstatement.

This section provides commentary on the significant audit risks communicated in the Audit Plan.

Risks identified in our Audit Plan	Commentary
<p>Management override of controls</p> <p>Under ISA (UK) 240 there is a non-rebuttable presumed risk that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.</p> <p>We therefore identified management override of control as an area of significant risk. The related areas of risk include management estimates, use of journals and any significant transactions outside the Authority's normal course of business.</p>	<p>To address this risk we;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - evaluated the design effectiveness of management controls over journals; - analysed the journals listing and determined the criteria for selecting high risk or unusual journals; - identified and tested high risk and unusual journals for appropriateness and corroboration; - gained an understanding of the accounting estimates and critical judgements applied by management and considered their reasonableness. <p>Our work to test a selection of journals is still in progress but to date our work has not identified any areas of concern in this area.</p> <p>The Authority's approach to the valuation of Property Plant and Equipment assets is to perform full valuations including physical inspections for a number of large assets each year. Full valuations with physical inspections for the remaining assets are performed using a four year rolling programme, with desktop valuations in other years to ensure that the carrying value of assets is not materially misstated. We agreed with management that it would be appropriate to disclose a critical judgement in applying accounting policies covering the approach to PPE asset valuations.</p> <p>Our audit work to date has not identified any other issues in respect of this risk.</p>

2. Financial Statements - Significant risks

Risks identified in our Audit Plan

Commentary

The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions (rebutted)

Under ISA (UK) 240 there is a rebuttable presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue.

This presumption can be rebutted if the auditor concludes that there is no risk of material misstatement due to fraud relating to revenue recognition.

Having considered the risk factors set out in ISA240 and the nature of the revenue streams at the Authority, we have determined that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition can be rebutted, because:

- there is little incentive to manipulate revenue recognition
- opportunities to manipulate revenue recognition are very limited
- the culture and ethical frameworks of Fire and Rescue Authorities mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable.

Our audit work has not identified any issues to change our strategy towards revenue recognition.

Fraud in expenditure recognition

As most public bodies are net spending bodies, then the risk of material misstatement due to fraud related to expenditure recognition may be greater than the risk of fraud related to revenue recognition. There is a risk the Authority may manipulate expenditure to budgets and set targets and we had regard to this when planning and performing our audit procedures.

Management could defer recognition of expenditure by under-accruing for expenses that have been incurred during the period but which were not paid until after the year-end or not record expenses accurately in order to improve the financial results.

To address this risk we;

- inspected transactions around the end of the financial year to assess whether they had been included in the correct accounting period.
- inspected a sample of accruals made at year end for expenditure not yet invoiced to assess whether the valuation of the accrual was consistent with the value billed after the year. We also compared listings of accruals to the previous year to ensure completeness of accrued items.

Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of this risk.

2. Financial Statements - Significant risks

Risks identified in our Audit Plan

Commentary

Valuation of the pension fund net liability

The Authority's net defined benefit liability represents a significant estimate in the financial statements. The estimate is complex given the large number of scheme members and the sensitivity of the estimate to key assumptions.

To address this risk we will :

- update our understanding of the processes and controls put in place by management to ensure that the Authority's pension fund net liability is not materially misstated, and evaluated the design of the associated controls;
- evaluate the instructions issued by management to the actuary as management's expert, and the scope of the actuary's work;
- assess the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the actuary;
- assess the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by the Authority to the actuary;
- test the consistency of the pension fund disclosures in the financial statements with the actuary's report;
- confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made by reviewing the report of the consulting actuary (as auditor's expert) and performing any additional procedures suggested within the report; and
- obtain assurances from the auditor of Kent Pension Fund as to the controls surrounding the validity and accuracy of membership data; contributions data and benefits data sent to the actuary by the pension fund and the fund assets valuation in the pension fund financial statements.

Our work in this area is still in progress. We will consider the work performed by the auditor of the Kent Pension Fund before finalising our audit opinion.

Valuation of land and buildings

The valuation of the Authority's land and building assets represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements.

We designed our work to address the risk that the valuation of land and building assets was materially misstated.

To address this risk we;

- evaluated management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate, including the instructions issued to the Authority's external valuer and the scope of their work;
- evaluated the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the external valuer;
- challenged the information and assumptions used by the valuer;
- Tested, on a sample basis, revaluations made during the year to ensure they had been input correctly into the Authority's asset register; and
- evaluated how management concluded that the carrying value of assets not revalued was not materially misstated.

Our conclusions from this work are reported in the section "Financial statements – key judgements and estimates".

2. Financial Statements – key judgements and estimates

This section provides commentary on key estimates and judgements inline with the enhanced requirements for auditors.

Significant judgement or estimate	Summary of management's approach	Audit Comments	Assessment
Valuations – Land and Building £92.469m Vehicles, Plant and Equipment £11.164m Assets Held for Sale £2.654m	<p>The Authority's asset base largely comprises specialised assets such as fire stations and training facilities. These are valued at Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC). The valuations are based on the cost of a modern equivalent asset delivering the same service provision.</p> <p>The remaining land and building assets are not specialised in nature and are valued at existing use value (EUV) .</p> <p>Full valuations including physical inspections are performed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -for all material assets annually ; and -for 25% of the remaining assets on a four year cyclical basis. For these assets desktop valuations are completed in other years to ensure that the carrying value of assets is not materially misstated. <p>The Authority engaged an external valuer, Avison Young, to complete the valuation of properties as at 31 March 2021.</p> <p>All assets are assessed annually for evidence of impairment.</p>	<p>We concluded that management's expert was competent and capable.</p> <p>The information disclosed in the financial statements was consistent with the information provided by the external valuer.</p> <p>For assets valued using DRC an estimate is required for the annual movement in building costs. In making this estimate for 2020/21 the valuer calculated a movement using judgement after considering the potential impact of Covid 19 on the reliability of two relevant national indices. We are seeking additional information from the valuer on this approach, including how the impact of location on costs has been taken into account for the 2020/21 valuations.</p> <p>Subject to the completion of outstanding work we have not identified any issues which are material for our opinion.</p>	TBC

Assessment

- [Purple] We disagree with the estimation process or judgements that underpin the estimate and consider the estimate to be potentially materially misstated
- [Blue] We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider optimistic
- [Grey] We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider cautious
- [Light Purple] We consider management's process is appropriate and key assumptions are neither optimistic or cautious

2. Financial Statements - key judgements and estimates

Significant judgement or estimate	Summary of management’s approach	Audit Comments	Assessment																								
Net pension liability – LGPS £45.768m Firefighters’ scheme £981.088m	<p>The Authority recognises and discloses the retirement benefit obligation in accordance with the measurement and presentational requirement of IAS 19 ‘Employee Benefits’.</p> <p>At 31 March 2021 the Authority has a net pension liability of £981.088m (2019/20 £790.626m) relating to the Firefighters Pension Schemes and £45.768m (2019/20 £30.959m) relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme as administered by Kent County Council.</p> <p>The Authority uses an external actuary, Barnett Waddingham, to provide an actuarial valuation estimate of the Authority’s assets and liabilities deriving from these schemes. A full valuation is required every three years.</p> <p>The latest full actuarial valuation was completed in 2018/19 for the LGPS and 2020/21 for the FFS. A roll forward approach is used in intervening periods. The valuations are based on key assumptions such as life expectancy, discount rates, salary growth and investment return. Given the significant value of the net pension fund liability small changes in assumptions can result in significant valuation movements</p>	<p>We engage an auditor’s actuary to assess the work of management’s actuary and the reasonableness of the approach used. The auditors’ actuary has provided us with indicative ranges for assumptions, which we report below. For one indicator (salary growth – FFS) we are seeking further clarification from management’s actuary on the assumption used. All other values used by management’s actuary are consistent with the ranges specified by the auditor’s expert.</p> <p>Our work to review the Authority’s Net Pension Liability is still in progress.</p> <table><tr><th>Assumption</th><th>Actuary Value</th><th>PwC range</th></tr><tr><td>Discount rate</td><td>2.0%</td><td>1.95 - 2.05%</td></tr><tr><td>Pension increase rate</td><td>2.85%</td><td>2.85 - 2.80%</td></tr><tr><td>Salary growth LGPS FFS</td><td>3.85% 3.85%</td><td>CPI + 1% CPI + 1.5% -2.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Life expectancy – Males currently aged 45 LGPS FFS</td><td>22.9 21.7</td><td>21.9 - 24.4 21.7 - 22.3</td></tr><tr><td>aged 65 LGPS FFS</td><td>21.6 20.5</td><td>20.5 – 23.1 20.5 - 21.1</td></tr><tr><td>Life expectancy – Females currently aged 45 LGPS FFS</td><td>25.1 24.2</td><td>24.8 - 26.4 24.2 - 24.8</td></tr><tr><td>aged 65 LGPS FFS</td><td>23.6 22.7</td><td>23.3 – 25.0 22.7 - 23.3</td></tr></table>	Assumption	Actuary Value	PwC range	Discount rate	2.0%	1.95 - 2.05%	Pension increase rate	2.85%	2.85 - 2.80%	Salary growth LGPS FFS	3.85% 3.85%	CPI + 1% CPI + 1.5% -2.2%	Life expectancy – Males currently aged 45 LGPS FFS	22.9 21.7	21.9 - 24.4 21.7 - 22.3	aged 65 LGPS FFS	21.6 20.5	20.5 – 23.1 20.5 - 21.1	Life expectancy – Females currently aged 45 LGPS FFS	25.1 24.2	24.8 - 26.4 24.2 - 24.8	aged 65 LGPS FFS	23.6 22.7	23.3 – 25.0 22.7 - 23.3	TBC
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aged 65 LGPS FFS	23.6 22.7	23.3 – 25.0 22.7 - 23.3																									

Assessment

- **Dark Purple** We disagree with the estimation process or judgements that underpin the estimate and consider the estimate to be potentially materially misstated
- **Blue** We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider optimistic
- **Grey** We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider cautious
- **Light Purple** We consider management's process is appropriate and key assumptions are neither optimistic or cautious

2. Financial Statements - other communication requirements

We set out below details of other matters which we, as auditors, are required by auditing standards and the Code to communicate to those charged with governance.

Issue	Commentary
Matters in relation to fraud	We have previously discussed the risk of fraud with management. We have not been made aware of any significant incidents in the period. No other issues have been identified during the course of our audit procedures.
Matters in relation to related parties	We are not aware of any related parties or related party transactions which have not been disclosed
Matters in relation to laws and regulations	You have not made us aware of any significant incidences of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations and we have not identified any incidences from our audit work.
Written representations	A letter of representation has been requested from the Authority.
Confirmation requests from third parties	We seek external confirmations from relevant banks and financial institutions to support our review of the Authority's yearend cash and investment balances. For one confirmation further inquiries were required and an amended confirmation was received. We have now received positive confirmation for all balances.
Accounting practices	We have evaluated the appropriateness of the Authority's accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures. Our review found no material omissions in the financial statements.
Audit evidence and explanations/ significant difficulties	All information and explanations requested from management was provided.

2. Financial Statements - other communication requirements



Our responsibility

As auditors, we are required to “obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence about the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern assumption in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and to conclude whether there is a material uncertainty about the entity's ability to continue as a going concern” (ISA (UK) 570).

Issue	Commentary
Going concern	<p>In performing our work on going concern, we have had reference to Statement of Recommended Practice – Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2020). The Financial Reporting Council recognises that for particular sectors, it may be necessary to clarify how auditing standards are applied to an entity in a manner that is relevant and provides useful information to the users of financial statements in that sector. Practice Note 10 provides that clarification for audits of public sector bodies.</p> <p>Practice Note 10 sets out the following key principles for the consideration of going concern for public sector entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of the going concern basis of accounting is not a matter of significant focus of the auditor's time and resources because the applicable financial reporting frameworks envisage that the going concern basis for accounting will apply where the entity's services will continue to be delivered by the public sector. In such cases, a material uncertainty related to going concern is unlikely to exist, and so a straightforward and standardised approach for the consideration of going concern will often be appropriate for public sector entities for many public sector entities, the financial sustainability of the reporting entity and the services it provides is more likely to be of significant public interest than the application of the going concern basis of accounting. Our consideration of the Authority's financial sustainability is addressed by our value for money work, which is covered elsewhere in this report. <p>Practice Note 10 states that if the financial reporting framework provides for the adoption of the going concern basis of accounting on the basis of the anticipated continuation of the provision of a service in the future, the auditor applies the continued provision of service approach set out in Practice Note 10. The financial reporting framework adopted by the Authority meets this criteria, and so we have applied the continued provision of service approach. In doing so, we have considered and evaluated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the nature of the Authority and the environment in which it operates the Authority's financial reporting framework the Authority's system of internal control for identifying events or conditions relevant to going concern management's going concern assessment. <p>On the basis of this work, we have obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence to enable us to conclude that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a material uncertainty related to going concern has not been identified management's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

2. Financial Statements - other responsibilities under the Code

Issue	Commentary
Other information	<p>We are required to give an opinion on whether the other information published together with the audited financial statements including the Annual Governance Statement, Narrative Report and Pension Fund Financial Statements, is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.</p> <p>Our work to date has not identified any inconsistencies. Subject to the completion of all outstanding work we plan to issue an unmodified opinion in this respect.</p>
Matters on which we report by exception	<p>We are required to report on a number of matters by exception in a number of areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with disclosure requirements set out in CIPFA/SOLACE guidance or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit, -- if we have applied any of our statutory powers or duties. <p>We have nothing to report on these matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - where we are not satisfied in respect of arrangements to secure value for money and have reported a significant weakness. <p>Our detailed work on Value for Money will be performed in August 2021.</p>
Specified procedures for Whole of Government Accounts	<p>We are required to carry out specified procedures (on behalf of the NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) consolidation pack under WGA group audit instructions.</p> <p>Detailed work is not required as the Authority does not exceed the threshold specified by NAO.</p>
Certification of the closure of the audit	<p>We intend to delay the certification of the closure of the 2020/21 audit, as detailed in our audit report, as our VFM work is not yet complete.</p>



3. VFM - our procedures and conclusions

We have not yet completed our VFM work and so are not in a position to issue our Auditor's Annual Report. We expect to issue our Auditor's Annual Report by 30 September 2021. This is in line with the deadline specified in the Auditor Guidance issued by the National Audit Office.

As part of our work we will consider whether there are any risks of significant weakness in the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We have not identified any significant weaknesses from our initial planning work as reported in our April 2021 Audit Plan.

4. Independence and ethics

We confirm that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on our independence as auditors that we are required or wish to draw to your attention. We have complied with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and confirm that we, as a firm, and each covered person, are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and we as a firm, and each covered person, confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

Further, we have complied with the requirements of the National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note 01 issued in May 2020 which sets out supplementary guidance on ethical requirements for auditors of local public bodies.

Details of fees charged are detailed in Appendix B.

Audit and non-audit services

For the purposes of our audit we have made enquiries of all Grant Thornton UK LLP teams providing services to the Authority. No non-audit services charged from the beginning of the financial year to date were identified.

Transparency

Grant Thornton publishes an annual Transparency Report, which sets out details of the action we have taken over the past year to improve audit quality as well as the results of internal and external quality inspections. For more details see [Transparency report 2020 \(grantthornton.co.uk\)](https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/transparency-report-2020)

Appendices

A. Audit Adjustments

We are required to report all non trivial misstatements to those charged with governance, whether or not the accounts have been adjusted by management.

Impact of adjusted misstatements

We have not identified any adjusted misstatements above the triviality level (£90,000) which we are required to report to Those Charged With Governance.

Impact of unadjusted misstatements

We have not identified any unadjusted misstatements above the triviality level (£90,000) which we are required to report to Those Charged With Governance.

Misclassification and disclosure changes

The table below provides details of misclassification and disclosure changes identified during the audit which have been made in the final set of financial statements.

Disclosure issues	Adjusted?
Note 20 Grant Income Note revised to include £6,762,000 Revenue Support Grant and make other adjustments so that note reconciles to SOCI.	✓
Note 4 Assumptions about the future and other sources of estimation uncertainty Disclosure on accumulated absences removed as not material. New paragraph added to cover impairment of debtors.	✓
Note 6 Expenditure and Funding Analysis “Outturn as Reported to Authority: Net cost of services” revised from £71,547,000 to £71,421,000. Matching movement in “Adjustments” column.	✓
A number of other minor changes to disclosure notes.	✓

B. Fees

We set out below our fees charged for the audit.

Audit fees	Proposed fee	Final fee
Statutory Audit	£43,418	TBC
Total audit fees (excluding VAT)	£43,418	TBC

The proposed fee for the audit is as follows:

£27,418: Total audit fee per Note 19 accounts

£16,000: Proposed additional fee (to be agreed)

£43,418: Total proposed fee

We understand that the Authority will receive a grant to support 2020/21 audit fees but the amount has not been confirmed. The final fee has therefore not been agreed with management or approved by the PSAA.

No non-audit or audited related services have been undertaken for the Authority.

16 June 2021

Alison Kilpatrick
Director Finance and Corporate Services
Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Dear Alison

Grant Thornton – Fee variation Determination

I am writing following our review of the fee variation proposed by Grant Thornton in respect of the 19/20 audit of accounts. You were disappointed with the outcome and asked that we set out our considerations in order that you could share them with Members.

By way of background the position and arrangements on audit fees and variations are set out in the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (Regulations). The current version states that the appointing person (PSAA) must set the scale fee before the start of the year of account (ie by 31 March 2020 for the 2020/21 year), which will always be before the preceding year's audit has been completed. A further complication is that the current Regulations do not allow PSAA to amend the scale fee once the year has started. In steady times this requirement would not be too problematic, but the turbulent times such as now, it results in the scale fee being out-of-date soon after it is issued. The pandemic has only compounded problems. You will be aware that MHCLG has recently consulted on amending the fee setting elements of the Regulations to a more practical timetable in recognition that the current set have been overtaken by events.

The Regulations also provide the legal framework for fee variations. Regulation 17(2) enables the scale fee to be varied, based on information supplied by the local auditor where the work involved in a particular audit was substantially more or less than that envisaged by the appropriate scale. Fee variation proposals do need to demonstrate that the additional work is required to enable the auditor to give an appropriate audit opinion consistent with the requirements of the statutory regulator, the Financial Reporting Council (FRC). The statutory Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office requires compliance with relevant professional and quality control standards issued by the FRC. Sir Tony Redmond acknowledged in his review that auditors are now having to do more work than was required at the time that bids were submitted (the initial basis of scale fees).

As we discussed we have a robust procedure to review and approve fee variations in accordance with the Regulations. The auditor is required to discuss the proposal with the audited body before any matter is referred to PSAA. Auditors then provide us with the detail of the proposal and whether or not the proposal has been agreed (in full or in part) by the audited body.

PSAA considers each and every individual claim carefully, irrespective of whether or not there is local agreement. In the case of claims that are not agreed by the audited body we make contact with the audited body (where possible, the Section 151 Officer) to hear the body's concerns so that we can take them into consideration when we make the determination. It might be that the body recognises the areas where additional work is required but is unable to agree the individual amounts. Likewise, there may be areas that the body does not recognise as requiring additional work, or where it does not consider that it has sufficient knowledge to make a judgement. We had a number of discussions with yourself and Nicola regarding Grant Thornton's proposed fee variations at Kent and Medway FRA.

The impact of COVID 19 on the audit of financial statements is multifaceted within a framework requiring compliance with auditing standards. Part of the impact is additional audit work is responding to the audit risks posed by the pandemic; revisiting planning and refreshing risk assessments, materiality and testing levels, scrutinising management's assumptions and estimates, and assessing financial resilience. All this is required irrespective of the circumstances of the individual body. The FRC has stated that the pandemic should not undermine the delivery of high-quality audits, and that auditors must continue to comply fully with required standards.

A second impact has been the additional audit time required as a result of remote working. Gaining an understanding via VC or phone is more time-consuming than working physically side by side. This impacts on communications between individual audit team members as well as between the audit team and the authority.

We noted that your Covid fee variation discussions with GT focussed on the remote working elements of the costs of the pandemic. You discussed with us the preparedness of the Authority for dealing with remote working and that you were comparatively well placed, given the degree of on-line communications and document sharing etc that had taken place in previous years. We confirmed that this element of your proposed additional fee is at the lower end of proposals, and so in line with you being well prepared.

You told us that that you thought that given the nature of your authority and its transactions the impact of the pandemic on your financial statements would be negligible. We have checked the audit file for your audit and confirmed that your audit team had completed a range of procedures and documentation assessing and validating audit risks. We understand that similar analysis and evaluation was mandated across bodies by firms, reflecting that the drive to improve audit quality has resulted in firmwide standardisation of processes. We know that it is frustrating for bodies when nothing appears to change as a result of this work, but it enables the auditor to document appropriate consideration of the potential risks. We have compared the cost of this work to elsewhere and it is at the lower end of charges for the impact of additional procedures required because of the pandemic.

The remaining three elements of the fee variation covered Pensions, Property Plant and Equipment, and the increased challenge from the professional regulators. We have reviewed all firms' core work programmes on these areas in order to understand the increase in work required since the start of the contract, and it is considerable. Sir Tony also noted this as part of his report. We have also reviewed the audit file for your accounts and confirmed that the expected work has been completed, and that the proposals are at the lower end of expectations.

The auditor was able to obtain the assurance required to give an unqualified opinion on your financial statements and an unqualified VFM arrangements conclusion. The auditors acknowledged that your preparation for the audit was good of in their Audit Findings Report. For information there are other audited bodies that are incurring additional fees because of accounts quality or preparation issues, unresolved and/or complex technical issues or because the auditors need to carry out additional work on the arrangements for achieving Value for Money.

I hope that this letter will provide reassurance for your Members that whilst the outcome from the fee variation review was not the one you wanted, we came to our conclusion based on a robust process, and that the challenge that you provided was taken account appropriately in making our determination.

Yours sincerely

Andrew

Andrew Chappell
Senior Quality Manager

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By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority - 22 July 2021
Subject: ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report seeks Members' approval to the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts and the proposed Letter of Representation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the Letter of Representation (paragraph 11 and **Appendix 1** refer);
2. Approve the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts (paragraph 22 to 32 and **Appendix 2** refer);
3. Agree that the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, be authorised to agree any final amendments that are necessary to the final version of the Statement of Accounts (paragraph 17 refers);
4. Consider and note the remaining contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Director, Finance and Corporate Services- Alison Kilpatrick
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 698262
EMAIL: alison.kilpatrick@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Background

1. Due to the recent pressures Local Public Authorities are facing in relation to Covid-19, changes have been made to extend the statutory audit deadlines for 2020/21 and 2021/22 for all Local Public Authorities, apart from Health Service bodies. The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulation 2021 amends the 2015 regulations for English Authorities and puts back the dates for completion of the draft accounts, public inspection and final publication.
2. Part 3, Regulation 10 (2) of the Accounts and Audits Regulations 2015 required that the Statement of Accounts (the Accounts) of the Authority for 2020/21 must be approved by Members no later than 31 July 2021. This has now been amended to 30 September 2021. Following approval, it is a further requirement that the person presiding at the meeting shall sign and date the Accounts to formally evidence the Authority's approval.
3. Prior to this approval, the Director Finance and Corporate Services, has published the draft Accounts on the Authority's website together with the information required by regulation to inform the public of their rights in relation to the Accounts. The Director, Finance and Corporate Services, will have first signed and dated the Accounts, and certified, at the end of the year to which they relate, that they present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and that the income and expenditure for that year is correct. This statement is now reaffirmed by the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, as she presents the Accounts to the Authority for approval.
4. In total, the public have 30 working days in which they may object, inspect and question the local auditor on the Accounts. Previously it was a requirement to hold the public inspection of accounts to include the first two weeks of June. This was removed and instead authorities must open the accounts for public inspection on or before the first working day of August 2021. This Authority advertised that the accounts were open for review between 24 May and 5 July 2021. Members may wish to note that the Director, Finance and Corporate Services did not receive any enquiries into the 2020/21 accounts during this period.
5. The Authority has responsibility for the approval of the Accounts and transfers to and from Reserves. This report details the final transfers into Reserves for which Members' approval has been sought in the Budget Outturn report for 2020/21, which appeared earlier on this agenda.
6. The purpose of this report is to now present the 2020/21 Annual Statement of Accounts for Members to consider and approve, having reviewed the earlier financial reports on this agenda.

The External Auditors' Report

7. The External Auditors are required to carry out the audit of the Accounts in line with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and in accordance with the Code of Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Controller and Auditor General in April 2020. The External Auditors are required to report annually to Members of the Authority on the results of the audit activity undertaken during the year, in line with their responsibilities under International Auditing Standard (UK and Ireland) 260 (IAS (UK&I) 260) "*Communication of audit matters to those charged with governance*".
8. The Authority's External Auditors, Grant Thornton, presented their Audit Findings Report for Members' consideration earlier on this agenda. Their report must always be presented for consideration prior to adoption of the Accounts, as it identifies any issues that could have an impact on the presentation of the Accounts or the Authority's control arrangements.
9. Members will note that in their report, Grant Thornton, has indicated that they expect to be able to issue an unmodified opinion on the Accounts. An unmodified (or unqualified) opinion confirms that the Accounts show accurately the financial position of the Authority, having been prepared in accordance with the relevant accounting policies and procedures, and that they contain all the information required. It should be noted that at the time of drafting this report the audit is not yet fully complete and the opinion can only be issued when the audit is concluded. At this point in time the opinion is therefore excluded from the draft Accounts attached at **Appendix 2** to this report.
10. The final accounts process is reviewed each year by the Finance Team and any improvements identified by them or the External Auditors from this year's final audit will be fed into preparations for next year's audit.
11. **Letter of Representation** - Formal signing of the Accounts and the issuing of the opinion by the External Auditors will take place once the Accounts have been approved by Members and the Letter of Representation (a draft copy of which is attached at **Appendix 1** for Members' approval) has been issued to the Auditors by the Director, Finance and Corporate Services. This Letter of Representation is a formal statement sent to the External Auditors, the intention of which is to provide assurances as to the robustness of the Authority's approach to the preparation and audit of its Accounts. There are no issues included in the Letter that need to be specifically drawn to Members' attention.

Comments by the Director, Finance and Corporate Services

12. Local Authority Accounts are complex documents and they include entries that are not included in normal company accounts. The contents of the Accounts are set out in the CIPFA Code of Practice (the "Code") but action is taken to exclude any information deemed unnecessary or immaterial to the understanding of the Accounts.
13. The timetable for closing and producing the 2020/21 accounts was agreed with the External Auditors in January 2021. Working papers to support the information included in the Accounts including various analytical reviews, schedules and explanations of any significant variances between the previous and current year are provided to the Auditors. This information together with budget monitoring reports and other information provided to Members is examined for consistency to ensure that Members have been kept adequately informed and are well briefed in order to effectively scrutinise the Accounts.
14. When producing the annual Accounts all accounting policies are reviewed to ensure their compliance with the latest Financial Reporting Standards, whilst at the same time consideration is also given as to whether any new accounting standards should be applied. This year the Financial Reporting Council issued an updated ISA(540), Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures, which requires more indepth reporting to the Authority as to how accounting estimates have been undertaken within the Financial Statements. As a result of this a new document providing further disclosure was reported to the April Authority for members review and approval.
15. As part of our closing process a review of the accounting policies is undertaken to ascertain if they are still current or need revising. As part of this review we identified that the valuations policy required amendment to provided better clarification and reduce the likelihood of material misstatement on the value of the Authority's Estate. Prior to 2020 the accounting policy with regards to valuations was to undertake a full inspection and valuation every 5 years, with values reviewed and adjusted for any impairments or increase in valuation to reflect significant change in values in the intervening years. A review has been undertaken of this policy and given the requirements of the Financial Reporting Council on Auditors to untake further testing in this area and the need to ensure reliable estimations within the Financial Statements, the policy was amended to ensure that the highest valued fire stations and service headquarters are now subject to a full physical inspection and valuation by the Authority's external valuers each year, as does 25% of the remaining estate on a four year rolling basis. This allows the valuers to provide more reliable estimates as the 25% of inspections are Kent wide and provide further supporting evidence of their valuations and allows them to gain a better understanding of the condition and maintenance regime of the Estate.

16. This year has been quite challenging with regard to the preparation of the accounts, in particular, the information the District Council's provide with regard to the collection, outstanding debt and provisions required in relation to the Authority's share of Business Rates they collect on our behalf. The extension to the financial reporting timescales resulted in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) not issuing the Business Rates end of year return to Districts on the 1 April as initially reported in their publication timetable for return submission on 30 April, but instead issued the form mid May for submission on 7 July. This meant that Districts had to provide the Authority with estimated figures for our share of the accounting entries and has meant that the Finance Team will be required to undertake a reconciliation between the estimated figures provided and the final return signed off by the Districts s151 Officer, to ascertain if there is a material difference that may need adjusting within the Financial Statements. We anticipate that as the Authority's share of the Districts figures amounts to only 1%, any difference will be below the materiality level, but we will liaise with the external auditors once this final information is available.
17. At the time of writing we are still awaiting 2 Districts final Business Rates returns before a reconciliation could be performed. The External Auditors Audit Findings Report, references that there is still some work outstanding particularly in relation to pensions and some outstanding testing to undertake. As such, there is a small possibility that the Statement of Accounts may need adjusting, but this would only be necessary if the change was deemed material. Members are therefore asked to agree that the Director, Finance and Corporate Services in consultation with the Chair of the Authority be authorised to make any required changes to the Statement of Accounts, prior to formally signing off the accounts for the year. Attached at **Appendix 2** is the current set of accounts that are being audited by Grant Thornton and as such are being reported on at this meeting today.

Reserves

18. **General Reserves** - Members had previously agreed that General Reserves (referred to in the Accounts as General Fund balances) should be maintained at a level which is equivalent to approximately 5% of the annual net revenue budget. Consequently, the General Reserve balance at 31 March 2020 was £3.710m.
19. **Earmarked Reserves** - The Authority has money set aside in Earmarked Reserves. These Reserves are held for specific purposes, to meet irregular or known future commitments or liabilities. In the Budget Outturn report for 2020/21 which appears earlier on this agenda, Members were asked to agree at the April Authority meeting that of the underspend £1m would be transferred to the Infrastructure reserve to fund improvements and alterations at various premises across the County and the balance (now confirmed at £1.837m) would be transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve.

20. After final transfers were made, Earmarked Reserves were £38.221m at 31 March 2021 with 71% held in the Infrastructure Reserve. Details of the balances and movements on earmarked reserves are shown in Note 15 (page 45) in the Statement of Accounts, which is attached at **Appendix 2**.
21. **Capital Reserves** - In addition, Capital Reserves of £7.875m, comprised entirely of Unapplied Capital Receipts, were included in the Balance Sheet at 31 March 2021 for use in funding the capital programme in later years.

Statement of Accounts

22. **International Financial Reporting Standards and CIPFA Guidance** - Whilst the Accounts are prepared on an International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) basis with the content and format of the Accounts being on similar lines to other private and public sector organisations, there are still adjustments that are made by regulation to local authority accounts. In local authority accounts, charges made for depreciation, leave accrual and current service pension costs are only notional and are reversed out of the Accounts so as to not impact on the funding required from Council Tax.
23. The Accounts for 2020/21 have been prepared in accordance with The Accounts and Audits Regulations (England) 2015 and Code of Practice (Code) provided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The content and format of local authority accounts is set out in the Code which is updated regularly to reflect changes in accounting standards. The document also has statutory backing as it is the definitive statement for 'proper accounting practices' for local authority accounts.
24. **Annual Governance Assurance Statement** - Elsewhere on the agenda is a report on the Annual Governance Assurance Statement for which Members' formal approval is required. This is published alongside the Accounts on the Authority's website.
25. **The Main Financial Statements** - These comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES), which represents the expenditure and income associated with the 2020/21 financial year; the Movement in Reserves Statement, which shows the changes to the resources available to the Authority over the year; the Balance Sheet, which reports the assets and liabilities of the Authority as at 31 March 2021; and the Cash Flow Statement showing the cash payments and receipts during the year.
26. The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and Balance Sheet both include entries relating to employee leave, depreciation, impairment and the entitlement to future pension payments earned during the year by employees, and current pension liabilities. These charges, which are included in the Cost of Services line of the CIES, are notional entries in the accounts and they are included so as to

show the full cost of operating the Service by recognising the fact that its activities today will result in costs in the future. To ensure that there is no impact on the funding requirement of the Authority these entries are later reversed out and the real costs added back in through a number of adjusting entries.

27. The presentation of pension assets and liabilities within the Accounts is a requirement of legislation governing the preparation of accounts. The overall impact of recognising the Authority's net pension liability of £1,026m on the Balance Sheet has been to create an overall negative balance of £874m.
28. It should be noted that, due to the inclusion of capital grants, the adjustments for current pension liabilities and gains and losses on pension assets and liabilities, and on the disposal of assets, the figures in the CIES can fluctuate significantly from one year to another. The Statement of Accounts differ from the budget monitoring reports submitted regularly to Members in that it does not compare expenditure with budget. By the end of the year transfers to reserves were £5.685m so, allowing for the £2.837m final revenue underspend this left a balance of £8.522m to be transferred to reserves. Accounting adjustments totalling £20.736m are then made so these, together with the final transfer to reserves, shows as a final Deficit on Provision of Services of £12.214m. This is set out on page 32 (**Appendix 2**) in the Expenditure and Funding Analysis Note, with supporting details of all the adjustments made in Note 6a on page 33 in the Accounts.
29. **Public Access** - The 2015 Regulations and subsequent 2021 amendment set out the requirements for the Authority to allow public access to, and copying of, all accounting records, and for public access to the External Auditors to allow for questions about, or objection to, the draft accounts. In accordance with this requirement the statutory 30 working days required for public access was from 24 May to 5 July 2021 and this was advertised beforehand on the Authority's website. Members may wish to note that there were no enquiries made in relation to the draft accounts.
30. Having now reviewed all the relevant reports in relation to the year end for 2020/21 earlier on this agenda, Members are asked to consider and agree the Statement of Accounts for the year as set out in **Appendix 2**.
31. **Publication of Accounts** - As soon as possible after the conclusion of the audit, the Authority will publish the Statement of Accounts and provide copies to any person on request. In order to comply with this requirement of publication, a notice will be placed on the Authority's website advising that the audit is complete and that the final Accounts are available to view and download from the website. Paper copies of the Accounts will also be made available on request at a charge of £8 per copy, which is approximately the cost of production, and is in line with the legislation which states that a reasonable charge may be made if appropriate.

32. **Summary of Accounts** - The Accounts have over the years become increasingly long and complicated. As a result, those with a non-public sector financial background may find them difficult to understand and interpret. Consequently, a set of summary accounts has been put together and these are attached at **Appendix 3**. The summary accounts only extend to 10 pages but they do provide a short explanation of the key issues.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

33. Budgetary provision has been made for the external audit fee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

34. Members are requested to:

34.1 Approve the Letter of Representation (paragraph 11 and **Appendix 1** refer);

34.2 Approve the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts (paragraph 22 to 32 and **Appendix 2** refer);

34.3 Agree that the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, be authorised to agree any final amendments that are necessary to the final version of the Statement of Accounts (paragraph 17 refers);

34.4 Consider and note the remaining contents of the report.

To
Grant Thornton UK LLP
30 Finsbury Square
London
EC2A 1AG

Contact
Alison Kilpatrick
Direct line
01622 692 121 ext 8262
Email
Alison.kilpatrick@kent.fire-uk.org

Our ref
AK/PC
Your ref

Date
TBC

Dear Sir/Madam

Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

This representation letter is provided in connection with the audit of the financial statements of Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority (the Authority) for the year ended 31 March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the Authority financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and applicable law.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

Financial Statements

- i. We have fulfilled our responsibilities for the preparation of the Authority's financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 ("the Code"); in particular the financial statements are fairly presented in accordance therewith.
- ii. We have complied with the requirements of all statutory directions affecting the Authority and these matters have been appropriately reflected and disclosed in the financial statements.
- iii. The Authority has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance. There has been no non-compliance with requirements of any regulatory authorities that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance.
- iv. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.
- v. Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable. We are satisfied that the material judgements used in the preparation of the financial statements are soundly based, in accordance with the Code and adequately disclosed in the financial statements.
- vi. We confirm that we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the valuation of pension scheme assets and liabilities for IAS19 Employee Benefits disclosures are consistent with our knowledge. We confirm that all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for. We also confirm that all significant post-employment benefits have been identified and properly accounted for.
- vii. Except as disclosed in the financial statements:
 - a. there are no unrecorded liabilities, actual or contingent

- b. none of the assets of the Authority has been assigned, pledged or mortgaged
 - c. there are no material prior year charges or credits, nor exceptional or non-recurring items requiring separate disclosure.
- viii. Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards and the Code.
- ix. All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which International Financial Reporting Standards and the Code require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.
- x. The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- xi. We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.
- xii. We have updated our going concern assessment and cashflow forecasts in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. We continue to believe that the Authority's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis and have not identified any material uncertainties related to going concern on the grounds that current and future sources of funding or support will be more than adequate for the Authority's needs. We believe that no further disclosures relating to the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements

Information Provided

- xiii. We have provided you with:
 - a. access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
 - b. additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of your audit; and
 - c. access to persons within the Authority's via remote arrangements, in compliance with the nationally specified social distancing requirements established by the government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- xiv. We have communicated to you all deficiencies in internal control of which management is aware.
- xv. All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
- xvi. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- xvii. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the Authority, and involves:
 - a. management;
 - b. employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - c. others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- xviii. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

- xix. We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.
- xx. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Authority's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.
- xxi. We have disclosed to you all known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

Annual Governance Statement

- xxii. We are satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) fairly reflects the Authority's risk assurance and governance framework and we confirm that we are not aware of any significant risks that are not disclosed within the AGS.

Narrative Report

- xxiii. The disclosures within the Narrative Report fairly reflect our understanding of the Authority's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the financial statements.

Approval

The approval of this letter of representation was minuted by the Authority at its meeting on 22 July 2021

Yours faithfully

Name.....

Position.....

Date.....

Signed by Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Name.....

Position.....

Date.....

Signed by the Chair on behalf of the Authority

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Statement of Accounts 2020/21

These financial statements replace the unaudited financial statements certified on 21 May 2021 and are certified by the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, as presenting a true and fair view of the financial position of the Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority at 31 March 2021 and the Authority's income and expenditure for 2020/21.

Alison Kilpatrick

Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Date: 22 July 2021

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Narrative Report

Introduction

The purpose of this Report is to provide the reader with:

- An understanding of the Statement of Accounts.
- A review of the Authority's revenue and capital budget outturn for 2020/21.
- An explanation of the Authority's financial position at the end of the financial year.
- An overview of developments which may have an impact on the Authority both now and in the future.
- A commentary on the Authority's financial performance and economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources in the year which includes:
 - An analysis of the development and the performance of the Authority in the year and its position at the end of the year.
 - Details of the most relevant financial and non-financial performance indicators.

Accounting Statements

The format of the Accounts for Fire and Rescue Authorities is prescribed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in their Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). The Code is updated annually and is based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The information contained within this Narrative Report is intended to be fair, balanced and concise. The Accounts and the Narrative Report are published on the Authority's website at www.kent.fire-uk.org.

To provide further detail and more clarity for the reader, each of the main accounts are supported by a number of notes and these follow on from the main statements that are described below.

The main statements in these accounts comprise:

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement: This is in two sections, the first section shows the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services as a result of income received and expenditure incurred over the financial year. The second section shows any other changes in net worth not included in the first section. Examples here will include any surplus or deficit on the current value of property, plant and equipment and the remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability.

The Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS): This statement shows the in-year movement on the reserves held by the Authority. These reserves are divided into two types, usable and unusable, with only the former being able to be applied to fund expenditure. This Statement also shows the change in the General Fund balance and the discretionary transfers that are undertaken to or from earmarked reserves.

The Balance Sheet: This sets out the financial position of the Authority at the end of the financial year. The top section of the Balance Sheet provides details of assets and liabilities and the bottom section shows the amounts held in usable and unusable reserves.

The Cash Flow Statement: Summarises the inflows and outflows of cash during the year analysed between those arising as a result of the Authority's operations, those arising from investing activity and those attributable to financing decisions.

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The Firefighters' Pension Fund Account: Details income and expenditure for the 1992, 2006, 2006 Modified and the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Schemes.

A glossary of the main terms used in the Statements are detailed on pages 70-73.

Revenue Budget and Expenditure

The Authority's main funding sources are Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate income and various Government grants which are used to fund the Authority's revenue budget. To ensure that the revenue budget is sustainable over the medium term, the Authority agreed to increase Council Tax by 1.97%, resulting in an annual increase in a Band D property of £1.53 making a Band D Council Tax £79.29 per annum. Local taxation (Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate income), including the Authority's share of the surplus on Collection Funds, increased the Authority's funding for 2020/21 by £2,028k. Government Grants (Revenue Support Grant and Non-Domestic Rates Top-up Grant) were increased by September 2019 CPI providing an additional £239k of funding for 2020/21. From 2020/21 the Small Business Rate Relief Grant is presented as a funding source rather than an income budget so, although it is not a new grant, the change in presentation increases the net revenue budget by £1,240k. The Authority's budget for 2020/21 was therefore increased to £74,258k, a £3,507k increase when compared to 2019/20.

As well as the pressures faced by the Authority on areas such as pay awards, inflationary prices growth and other commitments totalling £5,692k, an increase of £750k was required to the budgeted transfer to/from the General Reserve (from a £550k transfer from the reserve in 2019/20 to a £200k transfer to the reserve in 2020/21) to maintain the balance at approximately 5% of the net revenue budget, meaning savings of £2,935k were required to balance the 2020/21 revenue budget. Notably, £1,562k of the savings came from reducing the base revenue contribution set aside each year to fund large infrastructure expenditure. In addition savings of; £526k were identified by Budget Managers from within their devolved budget headings; £314k as a result of not allocating an inflationary uplift to areas of discretionary spend; £273k additional government grant income for small business rates relief and; £260k as a result of changes to pay budgets.

The revenue budget outturn for 2020/21 was an underspend of £2,837k. The summary of the revenue budget and the final outturn is shown in the table below:

Revenue Budget Outturn 2020/21

All figures shown are in £'000	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance
Service Costs	71,657	70,195	60,400	-9,795
Direct Pension Costs	1,889	1,889	2,141	252
Capital Financing Costs	3,382	3,382	3,195	-187
Transfers from(-) / to Reserves	-2,670	-1,208	5,685	6,893
Total	74,258	74,258	71,421	
Net Revenue Budget surplus for the Year				-2,837

Funded From:

Revenue Support Grant	6,422
Non-Domestic Rates	16,566
Council Tax	51,270
Total	74,258

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Revenue Budget Outturn 2020/21

A number of budget headings were underspent in the year. A summary of the most significant budget variances is detailed in the following table:

Revenue Budget Variances	£'000
Pay, pensions and other employee costs	-2,234
Bought in services and professional fees	-186
Information Communication Technology	-116
Printing, stationery and general office expenses	-81
Protective Personal Equipment and Workwear	-52
Income	-41
Other net underspends	-127
Net Revenue Budget Underspend	-2,837

At the end of the year £985k was transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund commitments made in 2020/21, but where the associated costs will not be incurred until after 31 March 2021. During the year £281k was transferred from this reserve to fund expenditure committed in 2019/20 but not incurred until 2020/21, making the 2020/21 net movement on the Rolling Budget Reserve £704k.

Grant Income

Grant receipts for the year are detailed in Note 20 to the Accounts. In 2020/21 the Authority received £13,148k of revenue grants. As in previous years these grants included funding for New Dimensions and New Threats related work £1,030k, Firelink £624k and its replacement Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) £69k, small business rate relief grant of £1,371k and a grant towards the additional cost due to increased employer pension contribution rates £3,536k. The Office of the Rail Regulator paid £57k towards the cost of work carried out by the Authority for the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority, £104k was drawn down from the apprenticeship levy and £8k was received for new burdens in relation to transparency reporting.

In addition, the Authority received new one-off grant funding in 2020/21 to cover costs incurred as a result of the introduction of the Fire Safety Bill (now The Fire Safety Act 2021) following the Grenfell incident. Grant funding, totalling £619k, has been provided to the Authority to support Fire and Rescue Services in making sustained progress in implementing the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report, improving resilience for major incidents (Grenfell Infrastructure Grant), to carry out a review of all high-rise residential buildings over 18m (Building Risk Review Grant), bolster fire protection activity (Protection Uplift Grant) and support the accreditation and recognised prior learning costs of fire protection officers and fire safety engineers (Protection Accreditation Grant). The Authority also received additional ESMCP infrastructure grant totalling £250k and a grant of £97k towards the administrative costs of implementing the remedy for the McCloud/Sargeant pension case. Additionally, a grant totalling £3,175k was confirmed to compensate the Authority for lost business rates income as a result of the additional retail and hospitality reliefs granted by the Government for 2020/21. This grant is offset by a large deficit on the business rates collection fund which will be recovered from the Authority, by District Council's and Medway Council, in 2021/22.

The Authority also received additional grant funding, totalling £1,589k, to cover costs incurred as a result of Covid-19. This funding has been utilised in a variety of ways, for example covering additional

Narrative Report

staffing costs incurred by providing support to partner organisations, changes required to our estate in order to comply with Covid-19 guidelines, extra costs incurred purchasing IT hardware and software in order to facilitate better remote working. The Government also announced a support package to partly cover the irrecoverable council tax and business rate loss of income in 2020/21, whereby 75% of losses incurred (estimated at £619k) will be funded by Government Grant.

Provisions

There are no new provisions this year. The Authority continues to make provision for Insurance with regard to claims notified but not yet settled and general provisions, which total £395k but also for the Authority's share of amounts provided by Kent billing authorities for Non-Domestic Rates appeals of £1,070k.

Revenue Reserves

At the February 2020 meeting of the Authority, Members agreed to maintain the target level of General Fund balances (also known as the General Reserve) to a level approximately equivalent to 5% of the net revenue budget. In line with this requirement, the General Reserve position at 31 March 2021 has been increased by £200k to £3,710k.

In addition to the General Reserve, the Authority also holds a number of other reserves, earmarked for specific purposes, details of which can be found in Note 15 in the Statement of Accounts. At 31 March 2021, earmarked reserves had increased by £8,322k from the position reported at the end of the previous financial year. The majority of funds held in earmarked reserves are within the Infrastructure Reserve, a significant part of which is planned to be used to fund investment in station and premises improvements and the purchase of light and heavy fleet vehicles in future years. It is therefore expected that the funds held within this reserve will diminish over the medium term, as and when capital spend is incurred.

Capital Budget and Expenditure

Capital expenditure is defined as the purchase, improvement or enhancement of an asset, where the benefit of the expenditure will last beyond the year in which it was incurred. Capital expenditure for 2020/21 was £3,517k against a revised budget of £3,711k.

Premises works included replacements of generators, boilers and roofs. Major improvement works on the Live Fire rig at Ashford were delayed until 2021/22 (£146k), offset by some increases in expenditure on boilers and generators (- £7k). During the year nine fire engines were delivered and are now just awaiting the fitting of all cameras. Some £7k of expenditure on Mobile Data Terminals has now slipped into 2021/22 awaiting delivery of modems and aerials. Delivery of a number of vehicles were undertaken during the year including, five 9-seater minibuses, a hydrant technician's van and forty eight small vans, which between them were £5k less than budget. A delay in the delivery of the base vehicle for the Dog Van conversion has meant that £42k has now been slipped into 2021/22. The table below gives a breakdown of the net £194k underspend compared to the revised budget.

Capital Budget Outturn 2020/21

All figures shown are in £'000

	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance
Station development programme and premises	650	418	279	139
Information and communication systems	175	51	44	7
Vehicles and equipment	7,839	3,242	3,194	48
Total	8,664	3,711	3,517	
Net Capital Budget Underspend				-194

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Details of the financing of the capital expenditure can be found in Note 22.

Borrowing and Capital Reserves

The Authority did not plan to fund any capital expenditure from borrowing in 2020/21. In line with previous years, the Authority continues to use temporarily surplus cash balances instead of borrowing from external sources to fund unfinanced capital expenditure from earlier years. A loan of £700k matured during 2020/21 so was repaid, reducing the level of outstanding debt as at 31 March 2021 to £1,425k.

The Authority received one capital receipt during the year of £12k and utilised £1,371k to fund capital expenditure so capital reserves reduced to £7,875k and were carried forward at 31 March 2021.

Treasury Activity

In February 2020, Members agreed the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for the forthcoming year. In 2020/21 the Authority began investing in Money Market funds to ensure the maximisation of interest earned whilst still maintaining security and liquidity. Interest rates have remained at the historically low level of 0.1%. The Authority has received a reduction in interest rates from a number of banks and has therefore seen a reduction in the average interest rate earned. During the year the Authority earned £103k of interest on cash deposits equating to an average interest rate earned of 0.21%.

The day to day cash management activity is carried out by the Kent County Council treasury team although the Authority uses the services of a Treasury Adviser for independent treasury advice.

Pension Assets and Liabilities

The presentation of pension assets and liabilities within the accounts is a requirement of the legislation governing the preparation of these accounts. The overall impact of recognising the Authority's true net pension liability of £1,026,856k on the Balance Sheet has led to an overall negative balance of £874,634k.

The net pension liability for 2020/21 for firefighter pension schemes has increased by £190,462k to £981,088k. Movements on the pension liability can be quite volatile and are not only dependent on the assumptions used but also there is an impact depending on whether it is a full or roll-forward valuation. The Actuary for the firefighter pension schemes has carried out a full valuation for 2020/21. Changes to the financial assumptions included a reduction in the discount rate and an increase in the expectation of future inflationary pressures, resulting in an overall increase to the value of the defined benefit obligation. The reassessment of the net defined benefit liability has had a significant impact on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement resulting in a revised remeasurement of £190,882k in 2020/21 compared to (£116,020k) in 2019/20.

Full details of the pension fund assets and liabilities can be seen at Note 25.

Financial Climate and Impact on Services

Financial Settlement and Budget for 2021/22 – The Government has stated that it will revisit the priorities for reform of the local government finance system at some point. But as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in April 2020, it was confirmed that the move to 75% Business Rates Retention would be delayed, the Fair Funding Review would be postponed until at least 2022/23 and the proposed reset of Business Rates Baselines would no longer take place in 2021/22. Understandably, in October 2020, the Government announced that the Spending Review setting departmental budgets would only be for 2021/22. The final settlement confirmed that Government funding would be 'rolled

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over' from 2019/20 with a marginal uplift applied to the Revenue Support grant. Alongside the regular finance settlement, the Government announced the Covid-19 Support Package. For this Authority, the additional government support will fund 75% of irrecoverable losses relating to the collection of 2020/21 council tax and business rates as well as contributing towards the increased costs of providing local council tax support to a higher number of working-age claimants. The Authority also agreed to increase Council Tax by 1.93% in 2021/22, which was within the capped 2% referendum limit.

As no new capital grants from Government have been announced, the Authority is currently planning to fund the 2020/21 and later years' capital plan through a combination of revenue funding, reserves or capital receipts.

The Authority has an outline four year [Medium Term Financial Plan](#) (MTFP) contained within the Budget Book approved at the Authority meeting in February 2021. The MTFP was developed in conjunction with the proposals contained within the [Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2020](#) so as to ensure that future plans are funded and sustainable.

Safety and Wellbeing Plan - The Authority works very closely with its partners to ensure Kent and Medway continues to be one of the safest areas to live and work in England. Careful planning and the ability to adapt and respond to change ensures the Authority is able to face the challenges ahead efficiently and effectively. As a result, performance has remained strong and the Authority continues to be one of the best performing authorities in the country.

The most recent Safety and Wellbeing Plan gave an overview of the development of a new suite of corporate strategies and also focused on outcomes delivered for the public.

There were no proposals for any station closures, removal of front-line fire engines, or compulsory redundancies of firefighters contained in the Plan.

The Authority set up and leads the national procurement hub providing officer resource to support national procurement efforts in categories like clothing, property issues and consumables related to Covid-19. Through this hub, more than 3.5m items have been sourced responsibly under the ethos of mitigating modern slavery supply chains.

The Corporate Plan, now known as the Customer and Corporate Plan, which reflects the Authority's focus on the customer, is the primary planning document for the Authority. All other documents, including the Safety and Wellbeing Plan link into this document. It was updated in April 2018 to reflect two new outward focused strategies and six internal strategies, all of which link to the Safety and Wellbeing Plan. The new Corporate Plan for 2021/22, along with six new corporate strategies will be submitted to the July meeting of the Authority for member approval.

The Authority continues to look at ways to operate more efficiently, for example by streamlining processes and making them leaner. The Authority has, for a number of years, made average savings of £2m/£3m per annum, some of which facilitates the funding of increased cost pressures, but other savings are re-invested back into the service to fund improved areas of activity or investment. But the Authority is clear that the requirement to generate savings each year will continue for some time to come. Consequently the Authority is planning to deliver a further £8m of savings over the next four years. The challenge is to make sure the Authority can achieve these savings and still maintain or enhance the services delivered to the public. The Authority will continue to keep the safety of local people, businesses and firefighters as its priority when responding to these challenges.

Future Issues - The Home Secretary in a statement on 16 March 2021 entitled Police and Crime Commissioner Review: Concluding part one, stated that a consultative White Paper on fire services reform will be published later this year. The White Paper will be used to set out a reform agenda in further detail and explore the review proposals on fire governance which could include:

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- Consulting on whether to mandate the transfer of fire and rescue functions to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner mode across England where boundaries are coterminous, unless there is an option to transfer fire governance directly to an elected Mayor.
- Consulting on how to address coterminosity challenges, including the south-west
- Legislating to create operational independence for chief fire offers and clearly separate and delineate strategic and operational planning for fire and rescue.

The current Policing and Crime Act allows for the Police and Crime Commissioner, should they so wish, to take on board responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service or to be a member of the Fire Authority. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner has opted for the second option and is now a member of the Fire Authority, with the same voting rights as any other member.

Changes to Building Safety - Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, the Government commissioned an inquiry led by Sir Martin Moore-Bick. Phase one of the Grenfell Tower inquiry reported on 30 October 2019 and made a number of recommendations for Fire and Rescue Services. The Fire Safety Act has now received Royal Assent and will amend the provisions of the Fire Safety Order 2005.

Funding - The Government announced that the proposal to implement the 75% Business Rate Retention Scheme in 2021/22 has been deferred, a final report setting out the full conclusions of the review into the business rates system will be published in 2021. The Fair Funding review that was to look at how money will be distributed to each Fire Authority is to be postponed until 2022/23 at the earliest. The Government intends to carry out another Spending Review during 2021, although the exact timing has still to be confirmed and it is not confirmed as to whether it will be another one year settlement or a multi-year settlement as preferred by many, as it aids stability in funding.

COVID-19 - The Authority's well-rehearsed business continuity plans were put into action with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The IT infrastructure supported a seamless transition for many corporate support staff to work from home. Our on-going good relationship with SECAMB meant we were able to offer support early on by assisting in the delivery of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) within and across four counties, training a number of our staff to drive ambulances, wherever possible utilising our on-call staff who have lost primary jobs as first volunteers. We were involved in moving some vaccine stocks from Doctor's surgeries, where it was in danger of going out of date to mass vaccination centres so the vaccine was used and not wasted, and have also been involved in the creation of a vaccination centre in Chatham.

Back in March 2020 we made contact with Age UK and other similar charities and offered our help, and also provided support to our local Kent Districts, Medway and Kent County Council. This led to food delivery, prescription delivery, supporting food banks and telephoning and befriending vulnerable people very early on in the crisis.

We have continued to support the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which co-ordinated the emergency PPE deliveries from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for social care as well as assisting with the identification of PPE supply opportunities to Kent partners which helped other smaller agencies within Kent.

Some colleagues were realigned to supporting frontline activities with partner agencies, which provided additional help and support across the county to communities in need. We reviewed our current projects and prioritised those essential projects that needed to be progressed and deferred those that could wait until resources were available to deliver them. Our capital programme is fully funded from earmarked reserves without the need to borrow, so the Authority had the flexibility to defer the planned replacement of a number of the light vehicle fleet which originally would have been

Narrative Report

replaced during 2020/21. The impact of Covid-19 lockdown resulted in a number of suppliers closing for a large part of the year, consequently the purchase of a number of vehicles was deferred until 2021/22.

Our core funding is derived from Council Tax and Business Rates precepts collected on our behalf by the Local District Councils and Medway. We are aware that Kent Districts have seen an impact on cash collection for these income streams and as a consequence closer cashflow monitoring has been key for all concerned.

Whilst the long term economic impact of Covid-19 is unknown, the Authority has commenced some scenario modelling on the potential impact on the Council Tax base for the number of households from which full Council Tax can be collected, to understand how this may affect the Authority's core funding in the immediate future. In the short term any unexpected shortfall in funding could be met from reserves whilst a longer term review is undertaken to ascertain how any shortfall in funding would be contained. Likewise the long-term impact on the properties from which Business Rates is collected needs also to be considered going forward.

The Pandemic has meant the vast majority of corporate staff have worked from home since 23 March 2020. Whilst this has brought some challenges, as would be expected, it has worked well and as such it will impact the way the organisation plans to work in the future. Discussions are underway with colleagues as to how the future working environment will look and feel, as a more flexible approach to work will be adopted. Plans are currently being developed to reconfigure some parts of the estate whilst improving other areas, particularly at stations and Headquarters and colleagues will be encouraged to be flexible in their considering their work base.

Electronic Communications Code Consultation - The Electronic Communications Code regulates the rights of telecommunications operations to install and maintain their apparatus on public and private land. A consultation on proposed changes to the Code was recently issued, with the objective of ensuring that the UK has sufficiently robust electronic communications networks to deliver the coverage and connectivity consumers and businesses need. However, provisions under the new proposals have the potential risk to impact on training capability, access to and use of sites, land disposal and financial income. The Authority has responded to the consultation and awaits the outcome of the consultation and review.

Narrative Report

The Development and Performance of the Authority in 2020/21 and Financial Position at 31 March 2021.

Budget Strategy

The Authority's budget for 2020/21 reflected the ongoing implementation of decisions made in the Safety and Wellbeing Plan. The Authority has a prudent approach to budget development ensuring that expenditure plans are fully resourced and that savings proposed are achievable.

A high proportion of the Authority's revenue budget is spent on staffing costs and these are monitored closely. Posts that become vacant are reviewed by senior management to determine whether or not they need to be replaced. This ensures that the post is still necessary and that opportunities are not lost to make further efficiency savings.

Firefighter levels over the last two years and forecast levels into the future are now requiring more regular recruitment to whole-time firefighter posts. Further courses are planned for the future, albeit that the approach to the delivery of training will become more modular over time, moving away from the more costly long term residential training courses. In all areas of staffing, this Authority endeavours to achieve savings without the need for compulsory redundancies, wherever possible to do so. The recruitment of on-call firefighters however, continues to be difficult, so the Authority continues to explore and find more innovative and flexible ways of using the existing resources.

Reserves

In these financially challenging and uncertain times General and Earmarked Reserves are an important tool to help mitigate against the risk of budget overspend and shortfalls in funding. The use of earmarked reserves is limited to smoothing the impact on revenue of expenditure that falls in peaks and troughs across different financial years or for funding one-off expenditure.

The amount set aside in the Authority's General Reserve is subject to an annual assessment to ensure that the balance should cover the costs of a significant emergency or unforeseen event. The Authority has £3,710k in General Reserves as at the 31 March 2021, which equates to approximately 5% of the net revenue budget.

At 31 March 2021 the Authority's earmarked reserves are healthy, with a balance of £38,221k. The year-end balance includes government funding to be used in 2021/22 to offset the Collection Fund deficit which has arisen due to the expanded business rates relief granted by the Government to businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors in 2020/21 (£3,175k). The balance also includes a government grant (£619k for this Authority) which has been provided to authorities to cover 75% of the 2020/21 irrecoverable council tax and business rates losses which are to be spread over the 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years in the Collection Funds. Details of the balances in each reserve and breakdown of government grants to be carried forward are provided in Note 15. Resources have been set aside in the Infrastructure Reserve to fund the Station Development programme, replacement fire appliances, vehicles, operational and IT equipment. As the revenue budget comes under greater pressure opportunities to replenish these balances will diminish as the current cycle of planned works and purchases are completed.

Cashflows

The Cash Flow Statement in the Accounts details the cashflows for the year and shows that the Authority's cash balances have increased by £7,492k over the year. The Authority uses its temporary surplus cash balances to fund its capital financing requirement (in lieu of borrowing) with the remainder placed in interest bearing deposit accounts or Money Market Funds. At 31 March 2021 cash, deposits and investments totalled £48,122k. This comprises of £41,931k which represents the money set aside in general and earmarked reserves, £7,875k of unused capital receipts less £1,684k being the net of other assets and liabilities at the end of the financial year.

Narrative Report

Over the next four years £1.425m of the Authority's loans from the Public Works Loan Board will be repaid and with over half of the Authority's reserves planned to be used for the Infrastructure Programme and other expenditure commitments, cash balances are expected to reduce over this timeframe.

The Authority's Financial and Non- Financial Performance Indicators

Financial Performance

Every year External Audit assesses the Authority's financial statements. The External Auditor's Findings Report for 2019/20 was reported to the Authority meeting in October 2020. The report confirmed that the Authority has a history of sound financial management with a strong financial planning framework and sound arrangements for developing, updating and implementing its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The Authority has a significant medium term capital programme, with an adequate level of reserves to address unforeseen risks and support future spending plans. Reporting of financial planning information to Members is comprehensive and transparent, with early scene-setting information provided ahead of the annual budget process. Integrated reporting of the annual budget with the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is provided with a detailed analysis of both the annual budget and future planning information in order to achieve the service priorities.

The Authority's external auditors, Grant Thornton, issued their Independent Auditor's Report on the 2019/20 accounts on 13 November 2020. The Auditor confirmed that an unqualified opinion had been issued on the 2019/20 accounts and had included an Emphasis of Matter in relation to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the valuation of land and buildings and the Authority's share of the pension fund's property investments as at 31 March 2020.

Governance Assurance Statement

The Authority is required to undertake an annual review of its governance processes and to publish a Statement setting out the results of the review. The Statement, which is available on the Authority's website, shows how the Authority demonstrates good governance in its actions and also how it meets the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services. This Governance Statement also includes an assessment on Operational Assurance.

Transparency

The Authority publishes extensive performance and financial information on its website including transparency data on all spending over £250, all expenditure incurred on purchasing cards, a register of contracts and the pay of senior managers. This allows the public to see how well the Authority is performing and provides evidence of value for money.

Inspection

In July 2017 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue services. The inspection focuses on how well the Service prevents, protects against and responds to fires and other emergencies, and also how well the service looks after its staff.

On 20 June 2019 HMICFRS published the results of our first inspection. This rated Kent Fire and Rescue Service as 'Good' across the three inspection pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. Of the 45 Fire and Rescue Services inspected during 2018/19, the Authority is one of only 16 to have been awarded 'Good' in all three pillars.

The second round of inspections was due to take place for KFRS in late September / October 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the planned inspection activity was postponed and instead

Narrative Report

a Covid-19 themed inspection took place in early September. This differed from a normal inspection by being run remotely and was not scored or rated. Key members of the Authority were interviewed online and Covid-19 specific data was gathered and submitted, as well as a self-assessment of our plans and response to the pandemic. The results of this themed inspection were published on Friday 22 January 2021 in the form of a letter as opposed to the usual detailed and scored report, a copy of the letter can be found on the HMICFRS website. The letter confirmed that the Authority had adapted well in responding to impact of the pandemic and that there was a constructive relationship across the service which enabled the service to move quickly to provide a new range of support outside of core activities.

Non-Financial Performance

Asset and Fleet Strategy

The Asset and Fleet strategy is one of eight strategies agreed by the Authority in support of its Customer and Corporate Plan 2018-22. It sets out how the Authority aims to protect the environment of Kent and Medway in terms of buildings and the vehicles that are used in delivering the service. Environmental improvements have been made 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. Other improvements to buildings have been made through better insulation, double-glazing and heating controls have also contributed to the reduction in energy use and improved efficiencies.

New buildings have been designed to meet current standards for energy efficiency and include building management systems and controls, insulation, LED lighting, and natural ventilation rather than using air conditioning. In addition, there is an ongoing programme to re-roof buildings, replace windows and appliance bay doors, all of which will improve insulation.

As part of our commitment to reducing our CO₂ emissions we recently committed to developing a climate action plan, as part of a drive to be carbon neutral by 2030. As an example, we have undertaken a biodiversity audit across the estate and introduced 12 hybrid vehicles into our diverse fleet. All of these vehicles are pool cars and their hybrid system combines the use of a petrol engine and an electric motor, improving fuel efficiency and reducing exhaust emissions. Being conscious of the environmental impact caused by cars, these hybrid pool vehicles allow us to make our journeys more sustainably.

We have installed CCTV in all of our fire engines and blue light response vehicles alongside telematics in the majority of our vehicles. This has resulted in a number of benefits, including a saving of £60k on our vehicle insurance premiums as well as a more effective insurance claims process. Better management information is now being obtained about our fleet, including improving driving styles in order to reduce fuel consumption and the associated environmental impact and to enable us to make informed decisions about the size of our fleet, based upon overall usage data.

Service Performance

The Authority has a comprehensive set of performance indicators some of which are considered to be strategic due to their importance in monitoring the performance of the Authority. Members approve the targets that are set for all the strategic indicators and regular reports are provided to Members to keep them updated of performance against these indicators.

The Authority attended 4,439 fires in 2020/21 (4,141 in 2019/20) which was higher than the performance in 2019/20, however it was consistent with the level in the previous two years. The three-year average outturn for the 2018-21 period is 4,326 fires, which is higher than the target of 4,091. The higher levels of fires can be attributed to outdoor fires and rubbish fires, both of which were high as a result of the prolonged period of dry weather and significantly lower levels of rainfall.

Narrative Report

Accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) accounted for 20% of all the accidental fires attended in 2020/21. Historically, the Authority has performed very well in this area and has been amongst the top performers nationally for more than ten consecutive years. In 2020/21 545 incidents were attended which is higher than the levels seen in the previous two years (+20) but was still lower than the target. The three year average performance for the medium term period (2018-21) was 531 which is 2.9% better than the target of 547.

Reducing the number of road traffic collisions (RTCs) across Kent and Medway and the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) as a result continues to be a priority for the Authority. In 2020/21 the Authority attended 673 RTCs which is 291 fewer than in 2019/20. A reduction in RTCs was seen in each month in 2020/21 compared to the previous year which includes a large reduction during the lockdown periods; the months of April and May had only a third of the expected levels of activity for those months and November and January had half the expected levels. The Authority continues to work with its partners to promote road safety across the county.

A large number of on-call stations and some officers respond to immediately life-threatening medical emergency calls, such as suspected heart attacks, in support of the ambulance service. Under this arrangement, the Authority's staff are sent to a medical incident as the quickest resource and are always backed up by the ambulance service. During 2020/21 the Authority attended 2,266 of these incidents which is lower than the amount attended in the previous year (4,496).

The Authority's response times to life-threatening incidents has not changed significantly compared to previous years. In 2020/21 72.7% of life-threatening incidents were reached within 10 minutes and 83.9% within 12 minutes. Overall performance is higher than the targets set for these indicators; 71% and 82% respectively.

In addition to responding to emergency calls, the Authority carries out a number of activities to support our customers and business safety. Despite Covid-19 restrictions in 2020/21, the Authority's Customer Safety teams have still delivered 8,412 Safe and Well Visits to customers across the County. In addition to these visits some 1,287 telephone assessments have been carried out. Our business safety teams audited 1,653 buildings in 2020/21. In addition the Authority has carried out 1,254 building regulation consultations in the last year.

The detail of the progress against all of the Authority's key performance indicators is reported regularly to Members of the Authority, and a copy of the report is available on the Authority's website.

Customer Service

Results of a recent survey completed by 268 Kent and Medway residents and conducted by the Institute of Customer Service, revealed that the Authority is providing an exceptional level of customer service across the board, including emergency response, safe and well home visits and building fire safety inspections. When benchmarked against other local public services in the institute's UK Customer Satisfaction Index, the Authority scores compare exceptionally well across the areas measured; experience, customer ethos, emotional connection, ethics and complaint handling. The Authority also compared well against the all sector UK Customer Satisfaction Index average, which includes private sector organisations. For overall customer satisfaction, we achieved a score of 95.3 out of 100 in the survey of its customers, compared to the public service UK Customer Satisfaction Index average of 75.3 and the all sector average of 77.

An internal survey was completed by Authority staff to understand how customer focused the organisation is and it was positive to see that the results of this survey showed that the Authority is better on average than its local public sector benchmark group. An application has now been submitted for Service Mark, a highly sought after accreditation by the Institute of Customer Service in recognition of our excellent customer service.

Narrative Report

Use of Resources Summary

The Authority has continued to make changes to the way that frontline and corporate services are delivered. Investment continues to be made in electronic systems to reduce administration and simplify internal processes. Working closely with partners is still important to the Authority, so we continue to look for efficiencies, wherever possible to do so, through joint procurement or joint working.

Last year the Authority delivered £2.9m of base revenue budget savings as set out in the budget for 2020/21 and over the next four years the Authority has the challenge to make approximately £8m of further savings which need to be both sustainable and deliverable so that a high quality and effective service can continue to be delivered.

The Authority publishes an annual Efficiency Statement, and as such this is incorporated in the Customer and Corporate Plan to be agreed by the Authority in July this year. The Authority remains in a strong financial position and plans to invest in its infrastructure will continue, by utilising its earmarked reserves and capital receipts. As always longer term sustainable planning continues to be a prerequisite going forward.

For further information on the accounts please contact the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, on 01622 692121 ext. 8262 or write to the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, KFRS Headquarters, The Godlands, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6XB.

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

The Authority's Responsibilities

The Authority is required to:

- make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Authority, that officer is the Director, Finance and Corporate Services;
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets;
- approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Director, Finance and Corporate Services' Responsibilities

The Director, Finance and Corporate Services, is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the *CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* (the Code).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, has:-

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with the local authority Code.

The Director, Finance and Corporate Services, has also:-

- kept proper accounting records which were up to date;
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In my view, the accounts which follow give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Nick Chard
Chair of the Authority
Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority

Alison Kilpatrick
Director, Finance and Corporate Services
Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority

22 July 2021

Report of the Auditors to the Members of Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority

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**Paul Cuttle, Key Audit Partner
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor
London**

XX July 2021

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This Statement shows the accounting cost in the year for providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from Council Tax. The Authority raises Council Tax to fund expenditure in accordance with regulations and this may be different from the accounting cost basis. The Council Tax position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

All figures are in £'000			2019/20			2020/21	
Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net		Note	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net
43,975	-3,542	40,433	Operational Response		42,251	-2,819	39,432
5,749	-128	5,621	Customer and Business Safety		5,676	-612	5,064
8,814	-3,195	5,619	Operational Policy and Resilience		7,927	-3,781	4,146
32,176	-1,228	30,948	Organisational Support		29,871	-1,948	27,923
3,007	-	3,007	Pensions, Financing and Other Costs		2,445	-	2,445
93,721	-8,093	85,628	Cost of Services	7	88,170	-9,160	79,010
			Other Operating Expenditure				
32	-	32	Loss on disposal of non-current assets		69	-	69
			Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure				
115	-	115	Interest payable and similar charges	7	80	-	80
21,773	-	21,773	Net interest on the defined benefit liability		19,091	-	19,091
-	-335	-335	Interest and Investment income	7	-	-103	-103
-	-10	-10	Gain(-)/Loss on financial instruments carried at fair value through profit or loss	7	-	43	43
			Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income				
-	-49,269	-49,269	Council Tax income	7	-	-49,959	-49,959
-	-14,881	-14,881	Non-domestic rates and top-up grant	7	-	-11,873	-11,873
-	-7,757	-7,757	Non ring-fenced grants	7	-	-13,208	-13,208
-	-14,449	-14,449	Government grant payable to pension fund	28	-	-10,936	-10,936
		20,847	Deficit on Provision of Services				12,214
		3,055	Surplus(-)/Deficit on revaluation of property plant and equipment	16			-2,903
		-116,020	Re-measurements of the net defined benefit liability	25			190,882
		-112,965	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				187,979
		-92,118	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				200,193

Movement in Reserves Statement

The Movement in Reserves Statement which follows, shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those reserves that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce the requirement for future Council Tax) and other reserves. The Code requires the previous year's figures to be disclosed in this Statement, hence both years are shown below. The note details the adjustments that are made to the total comprehensive income and expenditure recognised by the Authority in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to arrive at the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Authority to meet future capital and revenue expenditure. The following sets out a description of the reserves that adjustments are made against.

General Fund Balance

The General Fund is the statutory fund into which all receipts of the Authority are required to be paid and from which all liabilities are met, except to the extent that statutory rules might provide otherwise. These rules can specify the financial year in which liabilities and payments should impact on the General Fund Balance, which is not necessarily in accordance with proper accounting practice. The General Fund Balance therefore summarises the resources that the Authority is statutorily empowered to spend on its services or on capital investment (or the deficit of resources that the Authority is required to recover) at the end of the financial year.

Earmarked Reserves

The Authority holds a number of discretionary Earmarked Reserves to fund future expenditure or to meet potential future budget pressures. If an Earmarked Reserve is no longer required for its designated purpose the funds will be returned to the General Fund.

Capital Receipts Reserve

The Capital Receipts Reserve holds the proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets, which are restricted by statute from being used other than to fund new capital expenditure or to be set aside to finance historical capital expenditure. The balance on the reserve shows the resources that have yet to be applied for these purposes at the year end.

Unapplied Capital Grants Reserve

The Capital Grant Unapplied Account (reserve) holds the grants and contributions received towards capital projects for which the Authority has met the conditions that would otherwise require repayment of the monies but which have yet to be applied to meet capital expenditure. The balance is restricted by grant terms as to the capital expenditure against which it can be applied and/or the financial year in which this can take place. The Authority does not currently hold any unapplied capital grants.

Movement in Reserves Statement

The Net Increase/Decrease before the Transfers to Earmarked Reserves line in the table below shows the statutory General Fund Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from Earmarked Reserves are undertaken by the Authority. The 2020/21 Movement in Reserves Statement follows on from the 2019/20 Statement below:

2019/20		General Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
All figures are in £'000		Notes					
Balance at 31 March 2019 brought forward		-4,060	-29,360	-8,884	-42,304	808,863	766,559
Movement in reserves during 2019/20:							
Deficit on the provision of services	6	20,847	-	-	20,847	-	20,847
<i>Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</i>							
Re-measurements of the net defined benefit liability	25	-	-	-	-	-106,231	-106,231
Changes to injury scheme		-	-	-	-	-9,789	-9,789
Revaluation gains	16	-	-	-	-	-11,950	-11,950
Revaluation losses charged to revaluation reserve		-	-	-	-	15,005	15,005
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		20,847	-	-	20,847	-112,965	-92,118
<i>Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are different from revenue for the year calculated in accordance with statutory requirements:</i>							
Pension costs transferred to or from the Pensions Reserve:							
Net retirement benefits as per IAS19	25	-45,066	-	-	-45,066	45,066	-
Gain in relation to Government grant payable to the pension fund	25	14,449	-	-	14,449	-14,449	-
Employer's contribution to pension schemes	16	11,279	-	-	11,279	-11,279	-
Amount by which Council Tax and non-domestic rate income is different from the amount taken to the General Fund	16	-282	-	-	-282	282	-
Amount by which the employee benefit adjustment different from the amount taken to the General Fund	16	256	-	-	256	-256	-

Movement in Reserves Statement

2019/20 continued

	Notes	General Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
All figures are in £'000							
<i>Reversal of entries included in the deficit on the Provision of Services, in relation to Capital Expenditure, to the Capital Reserves</i>							
Depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	8	-4,969	-	-	-4,969	4,969	-
Revaluation gains on property, plant and equipment	8	831	-	-	831	-831	-
Revaluation losses on assets held for sale		-	-	-	-	-	-
Assets sold written out as part of the gain/(loss) on disposal	8	-382	-	-	-382	382	-
Transfer of cash sale proceeds as part of loss on disposal		350	-	-350	-	-	-
<i>Adj between Revenue and Capital Resources</i>							
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	16	189	-	-	189	-189	-
Voluntary provision for the repayment of debt	16	780	-	-	780	-780	-
Capital expenditure funded from revenue contribution	16	1,729	-	-	1,729	-1,729	-
Net increase/decrease before transfer to Earmarked Reserves		11	-	-350	-339	-91,779	-92,118
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves		539	-539	-	-	-	-
(Increase)/Decrease in 2019/20	16	550	-539	-350	-339	-91,779	-92,118
Balance at 31 March 2020		-3,510	-29,899	-9,234	-42,643	717,084	674,441

Movement in Reserves Statement

2020/21		General Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
All figures are in £'000	Notes						
Balance at 31 March 2020 brought forward		-3,510	-29,899	-9,234	-42,643	717,084	674,441
Movement in reserves during 2020/21:							
Deficit on the provision of services	6	12,214	-	-	12,214	-	12,214
<i>Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</i>							
Re-measurements of the net defined benefit liability	25	-	-	-	-	185,795	185,795
Changes to injury scheme		-	-	-	-	5,087	5,087
Revaluation gains	16	-	-	-	-	-3,123	-3,123
Revaluation losses charged to revaluation reserve	16	-	-	-	-	220	220
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		12,214	-	-	12,214	187,979	200,193
<i>Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are different from revenue for the year calculated in accordance with statutory requirements:</i>							
Pension costs transferred to or from the Pensions Reserve:							
Net retirement benefits as per IAS19	25	-37,491	-	-	-37,491	37,491	-
Gain in relation to Government grant payable to the pension fund	25	10,936	-	-	10,936	-10,936	-
Employer's contribution to pension schemes	16	12,166	-	-	12,166	-12,166	-
Amount by which Council Tax and non-domestic rate income is different from the amount taken to the General Fund	16	-4,763	-	-	-4,763	4,763	-
Amount by which the employee benefit adjustment different from the amount taken to the General Fund	16	-122	-	-	-122	122	-

Movement in Reserves Statement

2020/21 continued

All figures are in £'000

	Notes	General Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
<i>Reversal of entries included in the deficit on the Provision of Services, in relation to Capital Expenditure, to the Capital Reserves</i>							
Depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	8	-4,687	-	-	-4,687	4,687	-
Revaluation gains on property, plant and equipment	16	95	-	-	95	-95	-
Revaluation losses on assets held for sale	16	84	-	-	84	-84	-
Assets sold written out as part of the gain/(loss) on disposal	8	-81	-	-	-81	81	-
Transfer of cash sale proceeds as part of gain on disposal		12	-	-12	-	-	-
Capital Receipts Applied	22		-	1,371	1,371	-1,371	-
<i>Adj between Revenue and Capital Resources</i>							
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	16,22	151	-	-	151	-151	-
Voluntary provision for the repayment of debt	16,22	818	-	-	818	-818	-
Capital expenditure funded from revenue contribution	16,22	2,146	-	-	2,146	-2,146	-
Net increase/decrease before transfer to Earmarked Reserves	15	-8,522	-	1,359	-7,163	207,356	200,193
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves		8,322	-8,322	-	-	-	-
(Increase)/Decrease in 2020/21	16	-200	-8,322	1,359	-7,163	207,356	200,193
Balance at 31 March 2021		-3,710	-38,221	-7,875	-49,806	924,440	874,634

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at 31 March of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Authority. The net assets of the Authority (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Authority. Reserves are reported in two categories: usable and unusable reserves. Only the usable reserves represent resources available to the Authority to spend on services, the purchase of assets or to repay debt. Unusable reserves cannot be used by the Authority.

31 March 2020			31 March 2021
	All figures are in £'000	Notes	
	Property, Plant and Equipment		
92,960	Land and buildings	8	92,469
11,939	Vehicles, plant and equipment	8	11,164
1,422	Assets under construction	8	3,656
1,365	Surplus assets not held for sale	8	-
107,686	Long Term Assets		107,289
34,564	Short Term Investments	9	31,300
425	Assets Held for Sale	12	2,654
117	Inventories		128
9,160	Short term Debtors	10	11,399
9,330	Cash and Cash Equivalents	9,11	16,822
53,596	Current Assets		62,303
-700	Short Term Borrowing	9	-424
-10,683	Short Term Creditors	13	-13,468
-1,330	Provisions	14	-1,465
-12,713	Current Liabilities		-15,357
-1,425	Long Term Borrowing	9	-1,001
	Other Long Term Liabilities:		
-	Long Term Creditors	13	-1,012
-790,626	Firefighters' pension liability	25	-981,088
-30,959	Net LGPS pension liability	25	-45,768
-823,010	Long Term Liabilities		-1,028,869
-674,441	Net Assets		-874,634
	Usable Reserves:		
-3,510	General reserves	15	-3,710
-29,899	Earmarked reserves	15	-38,221
-9,234	Usable capital receipts		-7,875
717,084	Unusable Reserves	16	924,440
674,441	Total Reserves		874,634

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Authority during the financial year. The statement shows how the Authority generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing, and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Authority are funded by way of Council Tax and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Authority. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Authority's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital, i.e. borrowing to the Authority.

31 March 2020			31 March 2021
	All figures are in £'000	Notes	
	Operating Activities		
	Cash Outflows		
60,378	Cash paid to and on behalf of employees	7	60,908
117	Interest paid	7	85
18,302	Cash paid to suppliers of goods and services	7	15,301
78,798	Cash outflows generated from operating activities		76,294
	Cash inflows		
-49,603	Precepts received	7	-51,270
-6,319	Revenue support grant	7	-6,422
-6,515	Business Rates	7	-6,812
-8,378	Business Rate top-up grant	7	-8,514
-8,645	Other revenue grants	7,20	-8,889
-2,140	Cash received for goods and services	7	-2,101
-288	Interest received	7,27	-247
-502	Other operating cash receipts	7	-655
-82,390	Cash inflows generated from operating activities		-84,910
-3,592	Net cash inflow from operating activity		-8,616
	Investing Activities		
1,658	Purchase of property, plant and equipment	22	3,657
-350	Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment		-12
-155	Temporary investments		-3,221
1,153	Net cash flows generated from investing activity		424
	Financing Activities		
300	Repayment of amounts borrowed	9	700
300	Net cash flows from financing activities		700
-2,139	Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		-7,492
7,191	Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April	11	9,330
2,139	Movement in year		7,492
9,330	Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March	11	16,822

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

1. Accounting policies

Detailed below are the general accounting policies of the Authority. Other policies which refer to specific financial statement lines are detailed with the relevant note to the accounts. The policy is shown shaded in the relevant note.

General Principles

The accounts of the Fire and Rescue Authority have been compiled in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2020/21 (the Code) supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and other approved accounting standards. The accounts have been prepared with the objective of providing financial information that is useful to a wide range of users in making decisions about providing resources to the Authority and assessing the stewardship of the Authority's management.

Accounting policies are the principles, bases, and practices applied when preparing accounts, that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are to be reflected in the Statement of Accounts through recognising, selecting measurement bases for, and presenting assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes in reserves. When selecting and applying accounting policies the qualitative characteristics of financial information such as relevance, materiality and a faithful representation are taken into account.

1.1 Accounting convention

These accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis under the historical cost convention modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment. They are prepared on a going concern basis.

The particular policies adopted by the Authority are shown below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the accounts.

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

Revenue from contracts for the sale of goods or provision of services is recognised in the financial year when the goods are sold or when the services are provided in accordance with the performance obligations of the contract.

Revenue relating to Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) shall be measured at the full amount receivable (net of any impairment losses). A debtor/creditor position between billing authorities and Kent Fire and Rescue as the precepting body is required to be recognised for the cash collected by the billing Council from Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates debtors that belongs proportionately to the billing council and preceptors such as Kent Fire, Police and Kent County Council. The effect of any bad debts written off or adjustment in provisions are also shared proportionately.

Expenditure on goods and services (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure in the financial year that they are received. Adjustments are made at the end of the financial year if a significant portion of goods received will not be used until the following year, i.e. fuel stock.

Interest receivable on deposits and payable on loans is accounted for as income and expenditure respectively, on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by contracts.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Where income or expenditure has been recognised but the cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. The balance on debtors may be written down by a provision to reflect an estimate of the amount of any debts that may not be recovered.

1.2 Critical accounting, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the Authority's accounting policies, officers are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily available from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from those estimates, but the estimates and underlying assumptions are continually reviewed. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision, and future periods, if the revision affects both current and future periods.

1.2.1 Critical judgements in applying accounting policies

The Authority is required to disclose any critical judgements, apart from those involving estimations that officers have made in the process of applying the Authority's accounting policies. See Note 3 for details.

1.3 Other expenses

Other operating expenses, such as for goods and services, are recognised in the accounts in the financial year in which the goods are delivered or the services received. The exception to this is for utility bills where the accounts may include a twelve month charge for certain utilities but the charge is not necessarily adjusted to match the financial year as it is not considered material nor always practical to do so, but, where appropriate, it does represent a charge for a twelve month period. Any material change with regard to utility accounts will be monitored through the Authority's budget monitoring report and adjusted in the event of a material change at the end of the financial year to ensure costs are reflected in the correct financial year.

1.4 Income

Income is accounted for in the financial year that services are provided in accordance with the performance obligations of the contract. Income includes contract income for the provision of firefighting services in the Channel Tunnel, contributions from third parties towards joint-funded projects, insurance recoveries and income from the sale of obsolete vehicles and equipment. Debtors are shown net of any provision made for bad or doubtful debts.

1.5 Government Grants and Contributions

Where the condition of a grant or contribution has been satisfied for any grant or contribution received or where there is reasonable assurance it will be received, the amount of the grant or contribution will be included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Conditions are defined as stipulations that specify the terms under which a grant or contribution is to be used.

If the conditions have not yet been met then any grant or contribution received would be shown in the Balance Sheet as a receipt in advance within creditors. When conditions for a grant or contribution have been satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (within gross income) or as Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ring fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

1.6 Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute

This is expenditure which qualifies as capital for control purposes, but which does not result in the acquisition, creation or enhancement of a property, plant or equipment asset. These costs are charged direct to revenue expenditure and any related capital grant will also be credited to revenue income.

1.7 Treatment of Value Added Tax

VAT paid and received is accounted for separately and is not included as income or expenditure of the Authority, except where it is not recoverable.

1.8 Redemption of Debt

The Authority is required to set aside an amount each year for the redemption of debt. There is a statutory requirement for the Authority to charge the Council Tax payer with a minimum revenue provision (MRP) which represents 4% of the outstanding borrowing liability for historic debt. In addition, the Authority makes additional voluntary provisions which aligns the charge to the Council Tax payer with the life of the asset. All new debt has a minimum revenue provision (MRP) set aside calculated on the asset life.

1.9 Prior Period Adjustments

These adjustments are only made when there are changes in accounting policies required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions or other events and conditions on the Authority's financial position. Where a prior year adjustment is made it adjusts the opening balances and comparative amounts for the period as if the new policy had always been applied.

2. Accounting Standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted

The Authority has considered the impact of accounting changes that will be required by any new accounting standards that have been issued but not yet adopted by the Code for 2021/22. These changes relate to accounting amendments to IFRS 3 Definition of a Business and Interest Rate Benchmark Reform (phase 1 and 2) affecting IFRS9, IAS39, IFRS7 and for phase 2 only IFRS4 and IFRS 16. These changes are not expected to have a material impact on the Authority's Accounts but it will be dependent on arrangements in place at that time and further details of the potential impact will be disclosed when more information becomes available.

3. Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Authority has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

- There is a certain amount of uncertainty about future levels of Government funding. However, the Authority has determined that this uncertainty is not sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Authority might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

reduce levels of service provision and therefore impact on note 8 with regard to property, plant and equipment.

- The Authority engages an external valuer to undertake the valuation of property annually. Valuations are undertaken at the 31 March 2021. Last financial year due to the uncertainty and unprecedented set of circumstances as a result of the withdrawal from the European Union and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic our valuers advised that their valuations were reported on the basis of 'material valuation uncertainty'. Which meant that less certainty and a higher degree of caution should be attached to the valuation than would normally be the case and would require valuations to be kept under regular review. Having undertaken their valuations this year they have now removed their narrative with regard to 'material valuation uncertainty' as the withdrawal from the European Union has now passed and the country now begins its recovery from Covid-19 pandemic.

4. Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Authority about the future that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from assumptions and estimates. The items in the Authority's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2021 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets. If the Authority had to make cuts to its spending and was unable to sustain its current spending on repairs and maintenance it could bring into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets.

The carrying value of depreciating assets at 31 March 2021 is £70.4m. If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets falls. It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge for property plant and equipment assets would increase by £291k for every year that useful lives had to be reduced.

Pension Liability

Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. Actuaries are engaged to provide the Authority with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied. The carrying amount of the defined benefit obligation on all Pension Schemes at 31 March 2021 is £1,106,990k.

The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance, a 0.1% increase in the discount rate assumption would result in a decrease in the Pension Scheme liabilities of £20,584k.

Furthermore, a one year increase in the life expectancy assumptions across all schemes would give rise to an increase in the liability of £54,480k.

The table on page 64 provides further details on the assumptions used and their financial impact.

Last year the Kent Pension Fund disclosed a 'material valuation uncertainty' in relation to the directly held property and pooled property funds within the assets of the pension fund, due to the level of

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

uncertainty since the outbreak of Covid-19. We have not been advised that this is the case for this financial year.

Impairment of Debtors

The debtors figure included in the accounts for Council Tax and Business Rates (NNDR) includes an estimation for those debts that may not be recovered. The bad debt calculation is completed by each billing authority (12 Districts and 1 Unitary) and returned to us as the precepting authority to enable us to account for our share. An impairment allowance of £2.78m has been set aside in relation to Council Tax debts that may not be received and £264k in relation to Business Rates debts that may not be received. A provision of £1.07m has been set aside for business rate appeals that have yet to be determined. Any variation in actual recovery would affect the final collection fund surplus/deficit position. This in turn would impact on future year's budgets when recognised in line with statutory requirements.

5. Events after the reporting Period

There are no events to report.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

6. Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis note shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (Government grants, Council Tax and Business Rates) in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by the Authority in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision-making between the Authority's Directorates. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

All figures are in £'000

2019/20

	Outturn as reported to Authority	Adjustments	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
				See note 6a	
Operational Response	31,418	-12	31,406	9,027	40,433
Customer and Business Safety	4,728	4	4,732	889	5,621
Operational Policy and Resilience	4,395	52	4,447	1,172	5,619
Organisational Support	26,527	745	27,272	3,676	30,948
Pensions, Financing and Other Costs	3,196	-1,321	1,875	1,132	3,007
Net Cost of Services	70,264	-532	69,732	15,896	85,628
Other Income and Expenditure			-69,721	4,940	-64,781
Surplus (-) or Deficit (+)			11	20,836	20,847
Opening General and Earmarked Reserves Balance			33,420		
Plus Surplus on General Fund in the year			-11		
Closing General and Earmarked Reserves Balance			33,409		

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

All figures are in £'000

2020/21

	Outturn as reported to Authority	Adjustments	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
See note 6a					
Operational Response	32,805	53	32,858	6,574	39,432
Customer and Business Safety	4,669	-412	4,257	807	5,064
Operational Policy and Resilience	3,510	-94	3,416	730	4,146
Organisational Support	26,493	-1,133	25,360	2,563	27,923
Pensions, Financing and Other Costs	3,944	-1,689	2,255	190	2,445
Net Cost of Services	71,421	-3,275	68,146	10,864	79,010
Other Income and Expenditure			-76,668	9,872	-66,796
Surplus (-) or Deficit (+)			-8,522	20,736	12,214
Opening General and Earmarked Reserves Balance			33,409		
Less Deficit on General Fund in the year			8,522		
Closing General and Earmarked Reserves Balance			41,931		

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

6a Expenditure and Funding Analysis – Adjustments Between Funding and Accounting Basis

For internal reporting and budget monitoring purposes, the revenue budget is in a different format from the presentation required by the CIPFA Code for the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The table below provides a reconciliation of the final revenue budget underspend on services compared to the deficit shown on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2019/20					2020/21				
Adjustment for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pensions Adjustment	Other Differences	Total Adjustments		Adjustment for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pensions Adjustment	Other Differences	Total Adjustments	
All figures are in £'000									
3,037	6,252	-262	9,027	Operational Response	3,816	2,738	20	6,574	
1	893	-5	889	Customer and Business Safety	91	693	23	807	
106	1,089	-23	1,172	Operational Policy and Resilience	156	563	11	730	
993	2,649	34	3,676	Organisational Support	445	2,050	68	2,563	
-	1,132	-	1,132	Pensions, Financing & Other Costs	-	190	-	190	
4,137	12,015	-256	15,896	Net Cost of Services	4,508	6,234	122	10,864	
-2,665	7,323	282	4,940	Other Income and Expenditure from the Funding Analysis	-3,046	8,155	4,763	9,872	
1,472	19,338	26	20,836	Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Deficit	1,462	14,389	4,885	20,736	

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

7. Expenditure and Income Analysed By Nature

The following table provides a breakdown of expenditure and income by type that is included in the calculation of the deficit on the provision of services. These costs include notional charges which are reversed when identifying the amount to be charged to taxation.

All figures are in £'000	2019/20	2020/21
Employee expenses	61,402	62,895
Other operating expenses	16,422	14,411
Depreciation	4,969	4,687
Revaluations gains(-) / losses(+) on property, plant and equipment	-831	-179
IAS19 adjustment	12,015	6,234
Employee leave accrual adjustment	-256	122
Expenditure charged to Cost of Services	93,721	88,170
Government grants and contributions	-5,439	-6,385
Fees, charges and other service income	-2,654	-2,775
Income credited to Cost of Services	-8,093	-9,160
Net expenditure charged to Cost of Services	85,628	79,010
Interest payments	115	80
Pensions interest cost	23,277	20,479
Expected return on pensions assets	-1,541	-1,438
LGPS administration expenses	37	50
Loss on disposal of assets	32	69
Expenditure charged to Provision of Services	21,920	19,240
Pension fund top-up grant	-14,449	-10,936
Interest and investment income	-335	-103
Gain(-)/Loss on financial instruments carried at fair value through profit or loss	-10	43
Income from Council Tax	-49,269	-49,959
Income from Business Rates and top-up grant	-14,881	-11,873
Non-ringfenced Government grants	-7,757	-13,208
Income credited to Provision of Services	-86,701	-86,036
Expenditure and Income charged to Provision of Services	-64,781	-66,796
Deficit on Provision of Services	20,847	12,214

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

7a. Revenue from Contracts with Service Recipients

Policy:

The Authority recognises revenue from contracts with service recipients in accordance with the provisions of IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers, as reflected in the Code of Practice. Revenue is recognised in the financial year that services are provided in accordance with the performance obligations of the contract.

Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for contracts with Service recipients:

All figures are in £'000s	2019/20	2020/21
Revenue from contracts with service recipients:		
Operational Policy and Resilience – provision of fire cover	2,063	2,101
Total included in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	2,063	2,101

Amounts included in the Balance Sheet for contracts with service recipients:

All figures are in £'000s	2019/20	2020/21
Receivables, which are included in debtors net of VAT (Note 10)	346	351
Total included in Net Assets	346	351

The value of revenue that is expected to be recognised in the future related to performance obligations (as set out in the contract) that are unsatisfied at the end of the year is:

All figures are in £'000s	2019/20	2020/21
Not later than one year	2,099	2,119
Later than one year and not later than eight years	13,694	11,553
Amounts of transaction price fully unsatisfied	15,793	13,672

Revenue relates to the recovery of staffing costs. The performance obligations of the contract are met when services are rendered. An invoice is raised for a fixed amount each month for services provided in the preceding month.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

8. Property, Plant and Equipment

Policy:

Valuation - Where Property, Plant and Equipment has physical substance and they are held for the production or the supply of goods and services or administrative purposes and are expected to provide a benefit for more than one year, they are classified as capital assets. Expenditure in relation to these assets is recognised on an accruals basis and all expenditure on vehicles and building components is capitalised. There is a de-minimis limit of £10k for all other individual items of capital expenditure. Items that form part of the initial equipping of a new operational vehicle or in the setting up of a new building are capitalised as part of that project irrespective of their individual cost.

Assets that are undergoing work which results in them not being completed or becoming operational at the year-end results in the asset being carried forward in "assets under construction".

Assets are initially measured at cost and then carried on the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- Fire stations and other specialised buildings – Current value estimated using a depreciated replacement cost methodology utilising the concept of the modern equivalent asset.
- Houses and other non-specialised buildings – Current value based on existing use.
- Vehicles and equipment – Current value estimated using depreciated historic cost.
- Assets under construction – Actual cost.
- Surplus assets – Fair value based on the price that would be received on the sale of the asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

The Authority reviews the revaluing of its land and building portfolio every year using the services of an External Valuer. A component valuation approach is used for specialised assets such as Fire Stations, with the most significant elements of a building being separately valued and the remaining useful life assessed for each element. On appointment the Valuer carried out a physical inspection of all property for the valuation prepared at 31 March 2020. The highest value fire stations and service headquarters have a full physical inspection and valuation each year, as does 25% of the remaining estate on a four year rolling basis. For the rest of the estate values are reviewed and an adjustment made for any impairment or increase in valuation as appropriate, to reflect any significant changes in values during the year. Material additions to the premises estate are valued at the date of acquisition or when the capital works to the property are completed and the property brought into use. It is planned that all property will be subject to a full physical inspection again in 2024/25.

Valuations are updated for specific properties where significant improvements or modifications are made. Other minor replacements or works below £100k are included within additions at actual cost unless the actual value is expected to be materially different.

Revaluation gains are taken to the revaluation reserve and revaluation losses are written-off against any balance on the revaluation reserve for that asset or to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement if the balance on the revaluation reserve is less than the loss.

Depreciation - The charge for depreciation is calculated on a straight line basis over the estimated useful life of the asset taking into account the residual value of the asset. Estimated useful lives and residual values for property and plant are reviewed periodically, whereas the life and residual values of vehicles are reviewed annually. Depreciation is charged to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement from the date that the asset is completed. Where a large asset, such as a fire station, includes a number of components which have significantly different asset lives and are of a material value, the components are treated as separate assets and depreciated over their own useful economic life. Property, plant, vehicles and equipment under construction are not depreciated.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

At the end of the financial year a review is undertaken to see whether any asset has suffered an impairment loss. When impairment losses are identified they are charged to the revaluation reserve up to the amount of the accumulated gain. Where there is no balance or an insufficient balance on the revaluation reserve the loss is charged to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. When an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the relevant service line is credited with the reversal up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for the depreciation that would have been charged if a loss had not been recognised.

At the 31 March 2021 the Authority had capital commitments of £955k in relation to new vehicle purchases, mobile data terminals and some premises expenditure (£3,165k at 31 March 2020).

This is the range of useful asset lives used in the calculation of depreciation for each class of asset.

Class Of Asset	Asset life for depreciation purposes
Buildings	10 to 65
Roofs	5 to 50
Drill towers	5 to 45
Bay doors	10 to 20
Generators	10 to 25
Fire appliances	13 to 15
Cars and vans	5 to 7
Other operational vehicles	5 to 20
IT Equipment	3 to 10

In addition to land and buildings the Authority has a fleet of fire appliances, specialist vehicles and cars. This table provides an analysis of property assets at 31 March. During June/July 2020 the Authority demolished the old Thanet Fire Station which had become surplus to requirements with the newly built Ramsgate Station and the land is now held for sale.

	Operational	Surplus	Held for sale
Fire Stations	56	-	2
Headquarters	1	-	-
Residential houses	20	-	7
Technical Rescue Centre	1	-	-
Training Centre	1	-	-
Other	1	-	-

Revaluations

The Authority's External Valuers, GVA Grimley Limited t/a Avison Young, carried out a full valuation of the Authority's entire land and building portfolio at 31 March 2020. The highest value fire stations and service headquarters have a full physical inspection and valuation each year, as does 25% of the remaining estate on a four year rolling basis. For the rest of the estate values are reviewed and an adjustment made for any impairment or increase in valuation as appropriate, to reflect any significant changes in values during the year. The valuations have been carried out in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The valuations are in accordance with International Valuation Standards (IVS) and the

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

requirements of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Valuation – Global Standards 2020 (the Red Book).

The majority of the properties are classified as property, plant and equipment. The Authority's fire stations, Technical Rescue Centre, Equipment Store and training facilities are specialised operational properties and as such are valued at current value using the depreciated replacement cost method with a consideration of the assumed modern equivalent asset. The Authority's houses, which are occupied for operational purposes, and the Headquarters building are valued at their current value in existing use, and assets held for sale are valued at fair value.

Vehicle, plant and equipment assets are initially included at historical cost as a proxy for current value. The value and remaining life of fire appliances are subject to an annual review by the Engineering Team.

Prior to 2020 the accounting policy with regards to valuations was to undertake a full inspection and valuation every 5 years, with values reviewed and adjusted for any impairments or increase in valuation to reflect significant change in values in the intervening years. The revised accounting policy allows for a full inspection and valuation each year for those properties that are material in value to the financial statements and thereby provide more reliable estimations on their value and also reduce the possibility of not identifying significant changes in value to the property portfolio. By undertaking a full inspection and valuation on the remaining 25% of properties across the Kent portfolio it allows for the valuers to gain assurance and evidence for the assumptions applied across the remaining estate, thereby providing more reliable estimates and a better understanding of the condition and maintenance regime of our current properties.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

2019/20

	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Assets under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
All figures are in £'000					
Cost or Valuation at 1 April 2019	97,456	33,092	119	1,360	132,027
Additions	92	333	1,304	-	1,729
Revaluation increases recognised in the revaluation reserve	-2,238	161	-	-977	-3,054
Revaluation increases recognised in the deficit on the provision of services	1,206	-24	-	-351	831
De-recognition – disposals	-	-740	-	-	-740
Assets reclassified	-1,827	-22	-	1,424	-425
Assets under construction completed in year	-	-	-1	-	-1
Other movements in cost or valuation	-1,729	-1,200	-	-91	-3,020
Cost or Valuation at 31 March 2020	92,960	31,600	1,422	1,365	127,347
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment at 1 April 2019	-	-18,420	-	-	-18,420
Depreciation/impairment charge	-2,879	-2,077	-	-13	-4,969
Downward revaluation recognised in the deficit on the provision of services	-	-	-	-	-
De-recognition – disposals	-	708	-	-	708
Other movements in depreciation and impairment	2,879	128	-	13	3,020
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment at 31 March 2020	-	-19,661	-	-	-19,661
Net Book Value at 31 March 2020	92,960	11,939	1,422	1,365	107,686
Net Book Value at 31 March 2019	97,456	14,672	119	1,360	113,607

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

2020/21

	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Assets under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
All figures are in £'000					
Cost or Valuation at 1 April 2020	92,960	31,600	1,422	1,365	127,347
Additions	205	920	2,392	-	3,517
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the revaluation reserve	2,795	57	-	51	2,903
Revaluation increases recognised in the deficit on the provision of services	96	-1	-	-	95
De-recognition – disposals	-35	-405	-	-	-440
Assets reclassified	-750	-	-	-1,395	-2,145
Assets under construction completed in year	158	-	-158	-	-
Other movements in cost or valuation	-2,960	-130	-	-21	-3,111
Cost or Valuation at 31 March 2021	92,469	32,041	3,656	-	128,166
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment at 1 April 2020	-	-19,661	-	-	-19,661
Depreciation/impairment charge	-2,967	-1,703	-	-17	-4,687
Downward revaluation recognised in the deficit on the provision of services	-	-	-	-	-
De-recognition – disposals	3	357	-	-	360
Other movements in depreciation and impairment	2,964	130	-	17	3,111
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment at 31 March 2021	-	-20,877	-	-	-20,877
Net Book Value at 31 March 2021	92,469	11,164	3,656	-	107,289
Net Book Value at 31 March 2020	92,960	11,939	1,422	1,365	107,686

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

9. Financial Instruments

Policy:

Financial assets

Financial assets are recognised within the Statement of Accounts when the Authority becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument or, in the case of debtors, when the contract obligations have been met. Financial assets are classified into three types; each type based on the business model for holding the instruments and the expected cashflow characteristics of them:

- Amortised Cost – These represent instruments held to collect contractual cashflows, e.g. fixed term bank deposits and loans where repayments of interest and principal take place on set dates and at specified amounts.
- Fair Value Through Other Comprehensive Income – These represent instruments held that are measured at Fair Value and held to both collect contractual cash flows and sell the financial asset on specified dates, such as Money Market funds
- Fair Value through Profit or Loss – These represent Instruments held whose objectives are all other combinations of business model and contractual cash flows.

Financial assets are de-recognised when the contractual rights have expired or the asset has been transferred.

The Authority reviews its financial assets annually. Expected losses are calculated annually for assets that have a significant credit risk using a provision matrix based on historic write off of debt, whilst expected credit losses for investments are calculated based on the historic risk of default for each counterparty provided by the Authority's Treasury advisors. Debtors in the Balance Sheet are reduced by the impairment allowance. The subsequent impairment/loss allowance (if material) is then treated according to the Asset class:

- Assets valued at Amortised cost are reduced by the value of the expected losses (impairment) and reflected in their carrying amount.
- Assets carried at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income have the movements in their fair value reflected in the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.
- Assets carried at Fair Value through Profit or Loss have their loss allowance recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services.

Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Accounts when the Authority becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument, or, in the case of creditors, when the goods or services have been received. Financial liabilities are de-recognised when the liability has been discharged, that is the liability has been paid or otherwise discharged.

Financial liabilities are initially recognised at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. For creditors this will be the invoice amount.

The Authority has liabilities in relation to loans borrowed from the Public Works Loans Board and non-Public Works Loans Board creditors all of which are recognised at amortised cost.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Interest payable is charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure section in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year to which it relates.

Fair Value Hierarchy

Valuation techniques used to measure fair value are categorised into Levels 1, 2 and 3 where

- Level 1 has an active market with quoted prices for similar instruments
- Level 2 has some directly observable market information other than Level 1 inputs
- Level 3 has no market information and valuation requires significant judgement by management.

Categories of Financial Instruments

The categories of financial instruments that are carried in the Balance Sheet are shown in the table that follows:

All figures are in £'000	Long Term		Short Term	
	31 March 2021	31 March 2020	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Investments				
Current Investments ¹	-	-	-	17,734
Short term investments ²	-	-	31,300	16,830
Cash and cash equivalents ²	-	-	16,822	9,330
Debtors				
Long term debtors ²	-	-	-	-
Short term debtors ²	-	-	5,244	885
Borrowings				
Long term borrowing ²	-1,001	-1,425	-	-
Short term borrowing ²	-	-	-424	-700
Cash and cash equivalents ²	-	-	-	-
Creditors				
Short term creditors ²	-	-	-2,717	-2,542

¹ at fair value through profit and loss using a Level 1 valuation technique

² carried at amortised cost

The fair value of loans borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) is £1,550k compared to their book value of £1,425k (£2,271k: £2,125k in 2019/20). The fair value of the loans is higher than the carrying amount because the Authority's portfolio of loans comprises fixed rate loans where the interest rate payable is higher than the prevailing rates at the Balance Sheet date. This shows a notional future loss (based on economic conditions at 31 March 2021) arising from a commitment to pay interest to lenders above current market rates.

The Authority has a continuing ability to borrow at concessionary rates from the PWLB rather than from the market. However, a supplementary measure of the additional debt that the Authority will pay as a result of its PWLB commitments for fixed rate loans is to compare the terms of these loans with the new borrowing rates from the PWLB as at 31 March 2021. If a value was calculated on this basis the carrying amount of £1,425k would be valued at £1,460k. However, if the Authority were to seek to make early repayment of the loans to the PWLB, the PWLB would charge a penalty which is calculated by comparing the interest rate being paid on the loans to current borrowing rates. The penalty charge at 31 March 2021 if the loans were repaid on that date would be £106k.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

10. Debtors

All figures are in £'000	31 March	
	2021	2020
Central government bodies ¹	4,784	456
Other local authorities ¹	183	48
Collection Fund	2,780	3,600
Pension Fund	2,003	3,413
Other entities and individuals ¹	1,649	1,643
Total Debtors	11,399	9,160

¹ Part is included in the amount shown as short term debtors in Note 9.

Collection Fund debtors at 31 March 2021 are shown net of provisions for bad and doubtful debts £3,052k (£2,184k at 31 March 2020).

11. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Policy:

Cash and cash equivalents are represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions that are immediately repayable without penalty of notice not more than 24 hours.

In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Authority's cash management.

All figures are in £'000	31 March	
	2021	2020
Bank current accounts and cash held by the Authority	51	50
Short term deposits	16,771	9,280
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	16,822	9,330

12. Assets Held for Sale

Policy:

Non-current assets are classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through continuing use, and they meet the criteria contained in the Code. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value, less disposal costs. Fair value is the open market value including alternative uses.

The profit or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying amount and is recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as a gain or loss on disposal. Where a non-current asset is sold for £10k or more the amount is credited to income and then transferred to usable capital receipts in the Balance Sheet where it is available to fund new capital expenditure.

Non-current assets that are to be scrapped or demolished do not qualify for recognition as held for sale. They are retained as property, plant and equipment or surplus assets and their economic life will be adjusted accordingly. Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Assets Held for Sale (continued)

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Balance at start of year	425	350
Assets newly classified as held for sale	2,145	425
Revaluation gains	95	-
Revaluation losses	-11	-
Assets transferred to surplus	-	-
Assets sold in year	-	-350
Total Assets Held For Sale	2,654	425

13. Creditors

	31 March	
All figures are in £'000	2021	2020
Central government bodies ¹	1,818	3,035
Collection fund receipts in advance	1,376	1,098
Collection Fund creditor ³	4,525	836
Other local authorities ^{1,2}	718	845
Other entities and individuals ^{1,2}	6,043	4,869
Total Creditors	14,480	10,683

¹ Includes part of the amount shown as short term creditors in Note 9.

² Includes part of capital creditors totalling £38k (£194k at 31 March 2020).

³ Includes Collection Fund long term creditors of £1,012k

14. Provisions

Policy:

It is the policy of the Authority to make provisions in the accounts where there is an obligation to make a payment but where the amount or timing is uncertain. Provisions are charged to expenditure when the Authority becomes aware of the obligation based on the best estimate of the likely settlement. When payments are eventually made, they are charged direct to the provision. The level of the provision is kept under review and if the provision is not required it is reversed and credited back to expenditure in that financial year.

Insurance and General Provision

The Authority has external cover for insurance claims. At 31 March 2021 an estimate is made of the excess that could be payable for claims notified but not yet settled. A provision therefore needs to be maintained to fund these and any other potential claims. Whilst many claims are settled within a year some do take a number of years to be resolved.

Non-Domestic Rate Appeals

This provision is the Authority's share of amounts provided for by Kent billing authorities for Non-Domestic Rates appeals.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Provisions (Continued)

All figures are in £'000	Insurance and General Provision	Non-Domestic Rates Appeals	Total
Balance at 1 April 2020	237	1,093	1,330
Movements in 2020/21:			
Additional provisions made	389	1070	1,459
Amounts used	-53	-1093	-1,146
Unused amounts reversed	-178	-	-178
Balance at 31 March 2021	395	1,070	1,465

15. Usable Reserves

Policy:

The Authority maintains a general fund balance equivalent to approximately 5% of the net revenue budget and also a number of Earmarked Reserves which are held for specific policy purposes or future expenditure. The Authority makes use of Earmarked Reserves in order to smooth the impact of peaks of expenditure and also to ensure resources are available to meet known commitments and liabilities.

Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the general fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be funded from the reserve is incurred it is charged to the appropriate service line in year. The reserve is then appropriated back into the general fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no charge in that year to the Council Tax payer.

Movements in the Authority's usable reserves are detailed in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The relevance and balance of each reserve is reviewed annually, the purpose of each of the Earmarked Reserves is described below.

Government Grants

This reserve contains unspent Government grants that are being rolled forward for use in future years.

Infrastructure

This reserve is used to fund expenditure on infrastructure assets (premises, environmental improvements, IT and communications equipment, as well as vehicles and operational equipment) and includes a significant programme of investment in station improvements / redevelopments and vehicle purchases over the medium term.

Insurance and Resource

This reserve is used to smooth the impact of insurance claim volatility between financial years. It also provides an additional resource, should it be needed, to meet excessive costs in any one year, arising from the new Insurance Mutual Company arrangements. Given the volatility of the financial and economic markets, this reserve is also used to resource any one-off in year increases in costs that may arise at relatively short notice.

Rolling Budgets

This reserve is used to fund committed expenditure where the goods or services will not be received or delivered until the following financial year.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Service Improvement and Productivity

This reserve is used as a one-off funding resource to help pump-prime new initiatives or improvements to the Service. It will also help support collaborative initiatives with other blue light services and partner agencies.

This table below sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund in Earmarked Reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts transferred from Earmarked Reserves to meet General Fund expenditure in 2021/22.

All figures are in £'000	Balance at 1 April 2020	Net Reserve Transfers 2020/21	Balance at 31 March 2021
General Fund Balance	3,510	200	3,710
Earmarked Reserves:			
- Government Grants	748	4,867	5,615
- Service Improvement and Productivity	850	52	902
- Infrastructure	26,183	862	27,045
- Insurance and Resource	1,748	1,837	3,585
- Rolling Budgets	370	704	1,074
Total Earmarked Reserves	29,899	8,322	38,221
Total General and Earmarked Reserves	33,409	8,522	41,931

Additional breakdown of Government Grant Reserve balance:

All figures are in £'000	Balance at 31 March 2021
New Dimensions and New Threats	435
Building Risk Review and Protection Uplift	512
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)	347
Pensions Administration for McCloud / Sargeant Remedy	97
2020/21 Additional Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Reliefs	3,175
Covid-19 Support	430
Local Tax Income Guarantee Grant	619
Total Government Grants Reserve	5,615

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

16. Unusable Reserves

Policy:

The Balance Sheet includes a number of reserves that are maintained to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, retirement and employee benefits, available for sale financial assets and the collection fund adjustments. These reserves are not distributable and cannot be used to support spending.

This table summarises the items included within unusable reserves. Details of movements on the various reserves are in the paragraphs that follow.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Revaluation reserve	-42,408	-41,171
Accumulated Absences account	537	415
Pensions reserve	1,026,856	821,585
Collection Fund Adjustment account	4,190	-573
Capital Adjustment Account	-64,735	-63,172
Total unusable reserves	924,440	717,084

Revaluation Reserve - The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Authority arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment. The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost
- used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation, or
- disposed of and the gains are realised.

The Reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2007, the date that the Reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Balance at 1 April	-41,171	-46,050
Upward revaluation of assets	-3,123	-11,950
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the Deficit on the Provision of Services	220	15,005
Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	1,636	1,550
Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	30	274
Balance at 31 March	-42,408	-41,171

Accumulated Absences Account

Policy:

Salaries, wages and employment-related payments, including the value of leave earned but not yet taken, are recognised in the period that the service is received from employees. An accrual will be

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

made for the cost of any unused leave entitlement which has been carried into the following year. The accrual is based on the amount of holiday pay that would be paid for each day owed and includes an estimate for any related on-costs that would also be payable, such as national insurance. The calculation is reviewed every three years or in the event of a known material change.

The cost of the accrual for holiday pay and overheads is charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services and reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that the charge has no effect on the Council Tax payer.

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year, i.e. annual leave owed. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Balance at 1 April	415	671
Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	-415	-671
Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	<u>537</u>	<u>415</u>
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	122	-256
Balance at 31 March	537	415

Pensions Reserve - The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Authority accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. Statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Authority makes employer's contributions to pension funds or as it eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The balance on the Pensions Reserve shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources that the Authority has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Balance at 1 April	821,585	918,266
Re-measurements of the net defined benefit liability	190,882	-116,020
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	26,555	30,618
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	-12,166	-11,279
Balance at 31 March	1,026,856	821,585

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Collection Fund Adjustment Account - The Collection Fund Adjustment Account manages the differences arising from the recognition of Council Tax income and Non-Domestic Rate income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as it falls due from Council Tax and Non Domestic Rate payers compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across amounts to the General Fund from the Collection Fund.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Balance at 1 April	-573	-855
Amount by which Council Tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from Council Tax income for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	1,310	335
Amount by which non-domestic rates income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from non-domestic rates income for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	3,453	-53
Balance at 31 March	4,190	-573

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Capital Adjustment Account -The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements in accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The Account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Authority as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The Account contains gains recognised in relation to donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Authority and revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007 when the Reserve was created to hold such gains. The Movement in Reserves Statement provides details of the source of all the transactions posted to the Account, apart from those involving the Revaluation Reserve.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Balance at 1 April	-63,172	-63,169
<i>Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:</i>		
Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	4,687	4,969
Revaluation (gains) / losses on property, plant and equipment	-95	-831
Revaluation losses on assets held for sale	-84	-
Amounts of non-current assets written-off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	51	107
Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve	-1,636	-1,550
<i>Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing</i>		
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-1,371	-
Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	-	-
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund	-969	-969
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund Balance	-2,146	-1,729
Balance at 31 March	-64,735	-63,172

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

17. Officers' Remuneration

This table provides details of actual remuneration for 2020/21 (including employer pension contributions) for the Chief Executive and the other most senior officers employed by the Authority. Comparative information for 2019/20 is also shown below. Details of the Senior Officer structure and related salary is published on the Authority's website at <http://www.kent.fire-uk.org>

Post Holder Information	Salary and Allowances	Pension Contributions	Total Remuneration inc Pension Contributions
All figures are in £'000			
2020/21			
Chief Executive – A Millington	158.7	21.4	180.1
Director Operations – C Colgan	128.6	48.0	176.6
Director Finance and Corporate Services	128.8	17.4	146.2
Director Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety (New post July 2020)**	95.4	12.9	108.3
Assistant Director Operational Response*	97.0	30.6	127.6
Assistant Director Resilience*	97.0	27.9	125.0
Assistant Director Customer Engagement and Safety (Promoted to new post - Director Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety July 2020)**	24.9	3.4	28.3
Assistant Director Customer and Building Safety (from July 2020)**	67.6	19.4	86.9
Assistant Director HR and Learning	97.0	13.1	110.1
Assistant Director Corporate Services	97.0	13.1	110.1
	992.0	207.2	1,199.2

*Change in role title during 2020/21

**Assistant Director Customer Engagement and Safety was promoted to the new post of Director Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety in July 2020. A new Assistant Director was appointed to the vacant post in July 2020 when the post was retitled Assistant Director Customer and Building Safety.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Post Holder Information	Salary and Allowances	Pension Contributions	Total Remuneration inc Pension Contributions
All figures are in £'000			
2019/20			
Chief Executive – A Millington	156.4	19.5	175.9
Director Operations – S Bone-Knell	126.9	47.2	174.1
Director Finance and Corporate Services	126.8	15.9	142.7
Assistant Director Response (to March 2020)*	95.6	35.6	131.2
Assistant Director Response (from November 2019)*	39.9	10.9	50.8
Assistant Director Operational Resilience and Development (post deleted September 2019)	43.6	16.2	59.8
Assistant Director Channel Tunnel and Resilience	95.6	27.4	123.0
Assistant Director Customer Engagement and Safety*	95.6	12.0	107.6
Assistant Director HR and Learning	95.6	12.0	107.6
Assistant Director Corporate Services*	95.6	12.0	107.6
	971.6	208.7	1,180.3

*Change in role title during 2019/20

The table below shows the other employees, in addition to those senior officers detailed above, who are receiving more than £50,000 remuneration for the year (excluding employer pension contributions but including any benefits in kind):

Remuneration Band	Number of Employees	
	2020/21	2019/20
£50,000 - £54,999	76	52
£55,000 - £59,999	26	41
£60,000 - £64,999	16	12
£65,000 - £69,999	17	17
£70,000 - £74,999	3	3
£75,000 - £79,999	-	4
£80,000 - £84,999	4	2
£85,000 - £89,999	1	-
Total	143	131

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

18. Members' Allowances

The Authority paid the following amounts to Members of the Authority during the year. Details of allowances paid to Members are advertised in the local press and are published on the Authority's website at www.kent.fire-uk.org.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Allowances	79	77
Expenses	-	1
Total	79	78

19. External Audit Costs

The following external audit costs were incurred in the year.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Fees payable to the external auditor:		
External audit services carried out by the appointed auditor for the year	27	27
Additional Audit Fee	-	5
Refund from Public Sector Audit Appointments of retained earnings transferred from the Audit Commission and surplus funds	-	-3
Total	27	29

An increased charge to the audit fee for 2019/20 has since been agreed by the Public Sector Audit Appointments for extra work required by the Financial Reporting Council in relation to pensions and property, plant and equipment (£5k) and a further charge in relation to increased costs due to Covid19 (5k), increasing the 2019/20 audit costs from £27,418 to £37,418. The External Auditor has advised that for 2020/21 they anticipate a further £16k above the base contract fee of £27,418, this increase has still to be agreed.

20. Grant Income

This table shows the grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income:		
Revenue Support Grant	6,422	6,318
Small Business Rate Relief	1,371	1,169
S31 Compensation for Expansion of Business Rate Relief	3,175	-
Enterprise Zone Relief Grant	24	-
Local Tax Income Guarantee Scheme	619	-
Transparency Code Set-Up Grant	8	8
Covid-19 Grant	1,589	262
Credited to Services:		
From UK Government:		
New Dimension	972	972
Fire Link	624	600
ESMCP and ESMCP Infrastructure	319	63
Grenfell Infrastructure	132	-
Building Risk Review	60	-
Protection Uplift	382	-
Protection Accreditation	45	-

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

New Threats	58	78
Firefighter Employer Pension Contributions	3,536	3,536
Firefigther Pensions Administration	97	-
Apprenticeship Levy Draw-Down	104	190
Office of Rail Regulation - Channel Tunnel Safety Authority	57	63
Total	13,148	6,941

*2019/20 restated to include Revenue Support Grant

21. Related Parties

The Authority is required to disclose material transactions with related parties, bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Authority or to be controlled or influenced by the Authority. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Authority might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Authority. The necessary disclosures are detailed below:-

Central Government - Central Government has effective control over the general operations of the Authority – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Authority operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Authority has with other parties (e.g. Council Tax bills). Grants received from Government departments are detailed in Note 20 and amounts due to are detailed in Note 10 and amounts owed are detailed in Note 13

Senior Officers and Members - The total remuneration paid to senior officers is shown in Note 17 and details of Members' allowances paid in 2020/21 are shown in Note 18.

Members and senior officers of the Authority have direct control over its financial and operating policies and are required to disclose details of any transactions that the Authority has with any individuals with whom they may have a close relationship or any company in which they may have an interest. Members and senior officers of the Authority are required to declare whether they or any of their close family have been involved in any such related party transactions.

Kent County Council - The Authority contracts with the County Council for the provision of various services and the amount paid for 2020/21 was £165k (£171k in 2019/20). The services purchased include pension and treasury administration, IT network services and internal audit. The Monitoring Officer for the Authority is provided by the General Counsel and they are also the Monitoring Officer for KCC. However, from April 2021 the Authority's Monitoring Officer function will be provided by Medway Council.

Pensions - During the year amounts were paid to the Local Government Pension Scheme managed on behalf of the Authority by Kent County Council. Details of the amounts paid are shown in Note 25

SECamb – The trust continues to utilise Kent Fire and Rescue Service to co-respond to a number of incidents and to assist with gaining access at incidents where patients are in locked or inaccessible areas. There are a number of stations where SECamb are able to use KFRS facilities without charge in line with the Authority's charging policy.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

22. Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below, together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue, as assets are used by the Authority, the expenditure results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Authority that has yet to be financed. The CFR is analysed in the second part of this note.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	3,767	4,736
Capital Investment		
Property, Plant and Equipment	3,517	1,729
Sources of Finance:		
Capital Receipt	-1,371	-
Sums Set Aside from Revenue:		
Revenue Contributions towards Capital	-2,146	-1,729
Minimum Revenue Provision	-151	-189
Voluntary Revenue Provision	-818	-780
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	2,798	3,767
<i>Explanation of movements in year:</i>		
Decrease in underlying need to borrow	-969	-969
Change in Capital Financing Requirement	-969	-969

23. Leases

Policy:

Leases are classified as finance leases and recognised on the balance sheet where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risk and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases and are charged to service revenue accounts.

The Authority is the lessee of a number of operating leases, these include managed service arrangements for the provision of personal and protective equipment (PPE) for firefighters, watercoolers, lone worker devices and rental space for the control room.

The future minimum operating lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

	2020/21	2019/20
Not later than one year	776	775
Later than one year and not later than five years	4,092	4,349
Later than five years	633	1,639
Total	5,501	6,763

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24. Termination Benefits

Exit Packages by Cost Band

Cost Band £	2020/21				2019/20			
	Compulsory Redundancies No.	£'000	Other Departures Agreed No.	£'000	Compulsory Redundancies No.	£'000	Other Departures Agreed No.	£'000
0k - 20k	-	-	6	50	1	9	5	37
20k - 40k	-	-	1	25	3	97*	2	53
40k - 60k	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60k - 80k	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
80k - 100k	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
100k -150k	-	-	-	-	1	120	-	-
Total	-	-	7	75	5	226*	7	90

*Comparative amended to reflect final payments in 2020/21 being £4.6k higher than accrued in 2019/20

The cost of exit packages includes pension strain costs, redundancy costs and notice period salary costs if on garden leave. The total cost of exit packages (£75k) which has been reflected as expenditure in 2020/21 was all paid out in 2020/21.

25. Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

Participation in Pension Schemes

Policy:

The Authority accounts for its pension costs in accordance with the provisions of IAS 19 – Employee Benefits as reflected in the Code of Practice. As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its employees, the Authority offers retirement benefits. Although these are not actually payable until an employee retires, the Authority has a commitment to make the payments in the future. This commitment is accounted for in the year that the employee earns the right to receive a pension at some time in the future entitlement.

LGPS Pension strain costs arising from early retirement are met from the Authority's revenue budget.

Fire Schemes - Contributions to the pension fund in respect of non-abated pensions where pensioners are re-employed by the authority, ill-health retirements, and any lump sum and ongoing costs in respect of injury-related pensions are also met from the Authority's revenue budget.

The Authority maintains a separate ledger account for the Firefighters' Pension Fund and any shortfall is recovered from the Government by way of a grant. The grant is recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that it is receivable and reversed back out through the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Authority participates in four employment schemes:

- 1. Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which is operated by the Kent County Council Superannuation Fund, under the regulatory framework** - The governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the Superannuation Fund Committee of Kent County Council. Policy is determined in accordance with Pension Fund Regulations. The Investment Managers of the fund are appointed by the Committee.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

The principal risks to the Authority of the Scheme are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme, and structural changes to the Scheme (i.e. large scale withdrawals from the Scheme), changes to inflation, bond yields and the performance of the equity investments held by the Scheme. These are mitigated to a certain extent by the statutory requirements to charge to the General Fund the amounts required by statute as described in the accounting policy note.

This is a funded scheme, meaning that both the Authority and the employee pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level estimated to balance the pension liabilities against investment assets. Further costs arise in respect of certain pensions paid to retired employees on an unfunded basis. The contributions have been determined by the Fund's Actuary on a triennial basis and are set to meet 100% of the liabilities of the Pension Fund. The scheme assets and liabilities attributable to LGPS employees can be identified and are recognised in the Authority's accounts. The assets are measured at fair value and the liabilities at the present value of the future obligations. The increase in the liability arising from pensionable service earned during the year is recognised within the cost of services. The expected gain during the year from scheme assets is recognised within financing and investment income and expenditure. The interest cost during the year arising from the unwinding of the discount on the scheme liabilities is recognised within finance costs. Gains and losses from changes in assumptions during the year are recognised in the Pensions Reserve and reported as other income and expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Arrangements for the award of discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement for LGPS employees – this is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, no investment assets have been built up to meet these pensions' liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments as they eventually fall due.

Firefighters' Pension Schemes

Firefighters employed by the Authority may be members of the 1992, 2006 (2006 Modified Section) or 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme all of which are administered by the Authority. All Fire Pension Schemes are defined benefit schemes however, the schemes are unfunded and MHCLG uses a methodology consistent with the SCAPE approach (Superannuation Charge Adjusted for Past Experience) as the basis for calculating the employers' contribution rate paid by fire and rescue authorities. Unfunded means that there are no investment assets built up to meet the pension liabilities and cash has to be provided to meet the payments as they fall due. Each scheme has different contribution rates and different benefits.

In 2020/21 the Authority paid £8,327k (£8,116k in 2019/20) to the Firefighters' Pension Fund in respect of firefighters' retirement benefits, representing 29.6% (30.0% in 2019/20) of firefighter pensionable pay (employer contribution rates are 37.3% for members of the 1992 and modified schemes, 27.4% for members of the 2006 scheme and 28.8% for members of the 2015 scheme). In addition £629k was paid to the Fund in respect of ill-health charges (£351k) and non-abated pensions (£278k).

2. **The 1992 Firefighters' Pension Scheme** - is a final salary pension scheme governed by the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Order 1992 and related regulations. This scheme was closed to new entrants from April 2006.
3. **The 2006 New Firefighters' Pension Scheme** - is a final salary pension scheme governed by the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Order 2006. This scheme was closed to new entrants from April 2015. A new modified section was introduced within this scheme as a result of the Retained Firefighters' Pension Settlement and offered to retained firefighters employed between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006.

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

- 4. The 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme** – is a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme introduced on 1 April 2015 and is governed by the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014.

The Authority is responsible for the costs of any additional benefits awarded including lump sums paid on retirement due to injury and related annual pension payments.

The Authority is exposed to some risks (positive or negative) in relation to the Firefighter Pension schemes. The Government Actuary determines the employer pension contribution rates and will base these on estimates of interest rates (based on market yields on high quality corporate bonds), inflationary impact on benefits paid and the longevity of scheme members.

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits

The Authority recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the cost of services as they are earned by employees, not when the benefits are paid as pensions. The charge to be made against Council Tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment benefits is reversed out of the General Fund in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Court Ruling on Pension Account Disclosures

Two employment tribunal cases were brought against the Government in relation to possible discrimination in the implementation of transitional protection following the introduction of the reformed 2015 public sector service pension schemes from 1 April 2015. They were the McCloud and Sargeant pension cases. Transitional protection enabled some members to remain in their pre-2015 schemes after 1 April 2015 until retirement or the end of a pre-determined tapered protection period. The claimants challenged the transitional protection arrangements on the grounds of direct age discrimination, equal pay and indirect gender and race discrimination. Due to the similarities in the cases the Court of Appeal decided to combine the two cases and in December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled that the transitional protection offered to some members as part of the reforms amounts to unlawful discrimination. On 27 June 2019 the Supreme Court denied the Government's request for an appeal in the case.

McCloud / Sargeant case

The Government published a consultation on the proposed remedy to be applied to public sector pension scheme benefits, which closed for responses on 8 October 2020. On 4 February 2021 the Government published its response to the consultation, confirming their approach to remedying age discrimination, in line with their proposals.

Firefighters' Pension Schemes - In relation to those affected in the firefighter pension scheme the consultation response confirmed that the 'deferred choice underpin' would be the way to remedy the identified discrimination. This will enable eligible members, when they retire, to choose whether the final salary scheme or the CARE scheme would be better for them for the 'remedy period' between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The response also confirmed that the final salary schemes would close on 31 March 2022. An allowance was made for this judgement in the IAS19 disclosure at 31 March 2020. Calculations have been updated, as the figures for the previous accounting period assumed that all members who were previously members of a final salary scheme would be moved back into that scheme and any CARE scheme service since 1 April 2015 converted into final salary service. The final remedy will apply to those members that were in active service on or prior to 31 March 2012 and on or after 1 April 2015. These members are then to choose which scheme they are to accrue benefits in over the remedy period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022. From 1 April 2022 everyone will accrue benefits in the CARE scheme. The present value of benefits that would accrue over the remedy period under each member's final salary and CARE scheme have been estimated and it has been determined that the member would choose the scheme that had the highest present value. Where retirement dates differed early retirement factors were applied to the CARE benefits to

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bring them in line with the assumed retirement age of the final salary scheme. Where the member's final salary scheme retirement age is less than 55 it is assumed that the member would remain in the final salary scheme. The effect of this adjustment to the McCloud allowance is a very slight reduction to the overall liability.

Local Government Pension Scheme: The Scheme Advisory Board, with consent of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHGLC), commissioned the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) to report on the possible impact of the McCloud/Sargeant judgments on LGPS liabilities, and in particular, those liabilities to be included in local authorities' accounts as at 31 March 2019. This followed an April 2019 CIPFA briefing note which said that local authorities should consider the materiality of the impact. This analysis was to be carried out on a 'worst-case' basis (i.e. what potential remedy would incur the highest increase in costs/liabilities). The results of this analysis are set out in GAD's report dated 10 June 2019.

Although GAD were asked to carry out their analysis on a 'worst-case' basis, there are a number of other potential outcomes to the case which would potentially inflict less cost to the Employer. For example, the solution proposed by the Government would only apply the underpin to all members who were active on 31 March 2012. This would have less impact than GAD's scenario (which also includes any new joiners from 1 April 2012). An allowance was made for this judgement in the IAS 19 disclosure at 31 March 2020 and, as there are no material differences between the approach underlying the estimated allowance and the proposed remedy, no further adjustments have been included in light of the proposed remedy.

Court of Justice of the European Union ruling in O'Brien Case

On 7 November 2018, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled in favour of Mr O'Brien in a case concerning discrimination against part-time judges in the calculation of pensions. The ruling concluded that service prior to 7 April 2000 (the deadline for the Part-Time Workers Directive (PTWD) being transposed into UK law) must be taken into account under the PTWD for the purpose of calculating retirement pension.

In response to the judgement the Government has stated that those who have previously claimed under the PTWD would be entitled to a further remedy in respect of service prior to 7 April 2000. No allowance has been made in the IAS19 disclosure at 31 March 2021 as the remedy is yet to be agreed and there is a lack of historic data to make a reasonable estimate as to the cost of its impact.

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The Table below shows the transactions that have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year.

All figures are in £'000	LG Pension Scheme		Firefighter Schemes		Firefighter Injury		Total	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement								
<i>Service cost comprising:</i>								
Current service cost	4,426	4,359	13,125	16,928	659	875	18,210	22,162
Past service costs	30	992	160	140	-	-	190	1,132
<i>Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:</i>								
Net interest expense	758	664	17,770	20,306	563	803	19,091	21,773
Total Post-employment Benefits charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	5,214	6,015	31,055	37,374	1,222	1,678	37,491	45,067
<i>Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:</i>								
Return on Plan assets (excluding the amount in net interest expense)	-16,928	6,319	-	-	-	-	-16,928	6,319
<i>Actuarial gains and losses arising on changes in:</i>								
Financial assumptions	30,472	-10,112	191,382	-77,490	4,017	-1,432	225,871	-89,034
Demographic assumptions	-1,023	-2,131	-7,100	-3,251	-19	-2,932	-8,142	-8,314
Experience loss/gain(-) on defined benefit obligations	-1,157	6,470	-9,851	-25,206	1,089	-5,425	-9,919	-24,161
Other actuarial losses/gains(-)	-	-830	-	-	-	-	-	-830
Total Post-employment Benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	16,578	5,731	205,486	-68,573	6,309	-8,111	228,373	-70,953
Movement in Reserves Statement								
Reversal of net charges made to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services for post-employment benefits in accordance with the Code	-5,214	-6,015	-31,055	-37,374	-1,222	-1,678	-37,491	-45,067
<i>Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the current year:</i>								
Employer's contributions payable to scheme	1,769	1,601	8,956	8,322	1,441	1,356	12,166	11,279
Retirement benefits payable to pensioners – Authority	-	-	-	-	1,441	1,356	1,441	1,356
Retirement benefits payable to pensioners - Fund	1,480	1,697	23,595	26,357	-	-	25,075	28,054

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Pension Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the Authority's obligation in respect of its defined benefit plans is as follows:

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Present value of the defined benefit obligation:		
Local Government Pension Scheme	-125,902	-91,567
Fire Pension Schemes	-981,088	-790,626
Fair value of assets in the Local Government Pension Scheme	80,134	60,608
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	-1,026,856	-821,585

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Authority has in the long run to pay post-employment (retirement) benefits. However, statutory arrangements for funding the deficit mean that the financial position of the Authority remains healthy because:

- the deficit of the local government scheme will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees (i.e. before payments fall due), as assessed by the scheme actuary.
- finance is only required to be raised to cover discretionary benefits when the pensions are actually paid.

Discretionary benefits arrangements have no assets to cover their liabilities.

Reconciliation of the Movements in the Fair Value of the Scheme (Plan) Assets

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Opening fair value of scheme assets	60,608	63,859
Interest income	1,438	1,541
<i>Re-measurement gain/(loss):</i>		
The return on plan assets, excluding the amount in the net interest expense	16,928	-6,319
Other actuarial gains	-	830
Administration expenses	-50	-37
Contributions from employer	1,769	1,601
Contributions from employees into the scheme	921	830
Benefits paid	-1,480	-1,697
Closing fair value of scheme assets	80,134	60,608

The expected return on scheme assets is determined by considering the expected returns available on the assets underlying the current investment policy. Expected yields on fixed interest investments are based on gross redemption yields as at the Balance Sheet date. Expected returns on equity investments reflect long-term real rates of return experienced in the respective markets. The actual return on scheme assets in the year was £18,366k (2019/20: (£4,778k)).

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Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Pension Obligation)

All figures are in £'000	Local Government Pension Scheme		Firefighter Pension Schemes		Firefighter Injury		Total	Total
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
Balance at 1 April	-91,567	-90,688	-765,942	-857,286	-24,684	-34,151	-882,193	-982,125
Current service cost	-4,426	-4,359	-13,125	-16,928	-659	-875	-18,210	-22,162
Interest cost	-2,146	-2,168	-17,770	-20,306	-563	-803	-20,479	-23,277
Contributions from scheme participants	-921	-830	-3,703	-3,586	-	-	-4,624	-4,416
<i>Re-measurement (gains) and losses - actuarial gains/losses arising from:</i>								
changes in financial assumptions	-30,472	10,112	-191,382	77,490	-4,017	1,432	-225,871	89,034
change in demographic assumptions	1,023	2,131	7100	3,251	19	2,932	8,142	8,314
Past service cost	-30	-992	-160	-140	-	-	-190	-1,132
Experience loss/(gain) on defined benefit obligation	1,157	-6,470	9,851	25,206	-1,089	5,425	9,919	24,161
Benefits paid	1,480	1,697	23,595	26,357	1,441	1,356	26,516	29,410
Unfunded pension payments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March	-125,902	-91,567	-951,536	-765,942	-29,552	-24,684	-1,106,990	-882,193

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Local Government Pension Scheme assets comprised:

	31 March 2021		31 March 2020	
	£'000	%	£'000	%
Equity Investments	51,601	64	37,285	61
Gilts	476	1	471	1
Other Bonds	10,008	13	7,900	13
Property	8,293	10	8,247	14
Cash	3,973	5	1,586	3
Absolute Return Fund	5,783	7	5,119	8
Total	80,134	100	60,608	100

The table below details percentages of the total Fund held at 31 March 2021 in each class of asset (split by those that have a quoted market price in an active market and those that do not).

		31 March 2021	
		%	%
		Quoted	Unquoted
Fixed Interest Government Securities	Overseas	0.6	-
Corporate Bonds	UK	3.9	-
	Overseas	8.6	-
Equities	UK	14.3	-
	Overseas	38.6	8.1
Property	All	-	10.3
Others	Absolute return portfolio	7.2	-
	Private equity	-	2.5
	Infrastructure	-	1.0
	Derivatives	-	-
	Cash/temporary investments	-	4.7
Net Current Assets	Debtors	-	0.5
	Creditors	-	-0.3
Total		73.2	26.8

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Significant Actuarial Assumptions

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and Firefighter Pension Schemes liabilities have both been assessed by Barnet Waddingham, an independent firm of Actuaries. The principal assumptions used by the Actuary have been:

	Pension Scheme			
	Local Government		Firefighter	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
<i>Mortality assumptions:</i>				
Longevity at 65 for current male pensioners:	21.6	21.8	20.5	20.8
Longevity at 65 for current female pensioners	23.6	23.7	22.7	22.9
Longevity at 65 for future male pensioners	22.9	23.2	21.7	22.2
Longevity at 65 for future female pensioners	25.1	25.2	24.2	24.4
<i>Other assumptions:</i>				
Rate of consumer price index inflation	2.85%	1.95%	2.85%	1.90%
Rate of retail price index inflation	3.20%	2.75%	3.25%	2.70%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.85%	2.95%	3.85%	2.90%
Rate of increase in pensions	2.85%	1.95%	2.85%	1.90%
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	2.00%	2.35%	2.00%	2.35%
Take-up of option to pay 50% of contributions for 50% of benefits	0.00%	0.00%	N/A	N/A
Take-up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each relevant change that the assumption is changed whilst all other assumptions remain constant. The assumptions in longevity, for example assume that life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice this is unlikely to occur, and changes in some of the assumptions may be interrelated. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme, i.e. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method. The methods and assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis did not change from those used in the previous period.

Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Schemes

Change in assumption:	Local Government Pension Scheme		Firefighter Pension Schemes		Injury and Ill-Health	
	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease
All figures are in £'000						
<i>Increase or decrease:</i>						
Life expectancy by 1 year	5,156	-4,947	47,451	-45,138	1,873	-1,762
Rate of increase in salaries by 0.1%	387	-383	1,697	-1,688	-	-
Rate of increase in pensions by 0.1%	2,478	-2,420	15,906	-15,594	353	-350
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities by 0.1%	-2,824	2,892	-17,408	17,769	-352	-357

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Impact on the Authority's Cash Flows

Employer contributions for the LGPS scheme are now set to cover 100% of current service costs. The last triennial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2019, to determine contribution rates for the period from April 2020 to March 2023. The Authority's contribution rates will be increased from the current rate of 13.5% in 2020/21 to 14.5% from 1 April 2021 and to 15.5% from 1 April 2022. The next actuarial valuation of the Fund will be carried out as at 31 March 2022 and will set contributions for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026. The LGPS scheme became a career-average revalued earnings (CARE) scheme from April 2014.

On 28 February 2019, the Government Actuary Department (GAD) published the final reports into the 2016 valuation of the firefighter pension schemes. This included the scheme specific employer contribution rates for the period April 2019 to March 2023. Employer contribution rates increased significantly as a result of the valuation and the Government has confirmed that a section 31 grant will continue to be paid to authority's covering approximately 85% of the additional cost in 2021/22.

Unless firefighters had protection under existing scheme membership, all firefighters transferred to the 2015 Firefighter CARE Pension Scheme on 1 April 2015. The Authority expects to make the following contributions to pension schemes in the year to 31 March 2022: LGPS (14.5%) £2,072k, 1992 Firefighter Pension Scheme (37.3%) £994k, 2006 Firefighter Pension Scheme (27.4%) £85k, 2015 Firefighter Pension Scheme (28.8%) £7,370k and Modified 2006 Firefighter Pension Section (37.3%) £54k. The estimated weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for scheme members is 18 years for the Firefighter Schemes and 23 years for LGPS (19 and 23 years respectively in 2019/20).

26. Contingent Liabilities and Assets

Policy:

A contingent liability - is a possible obligation that arises from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Authority. They may also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but the possibility of a payment is remote or the amount cannot be measured sufficiently reliably.

A contingent asset - arises from a past event which gives the Authority a possible asset whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Authority. A contingent asset is disclosed where an inflow of economic benefit is possible.

Contingent assets and liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts. The Authority is required to disclose if there are possible obligations which may require payment or a transfer of economic benefit at some time in the future.

Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) - The Authority is one of the twelve fire authorities that now form the hybrid discretionary mutual protection company to provide financial indemnity protection. All twelve services have been working together to reduce risk and share best practice. Protection is in place to limit each member's exposure to financial loss. Contributions are paid to the company and any surplus from operations is held by the company in their reserve. The reserve enables peaks and troughs of claims expenditure to be managed and if the current level of performance is maintained, these funds could also be used for a number of other purposes including funding for improved risk management; to increase the level of claims costs borne by FRIC (thereby

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reducing external insurance costs); or reducing the contributions of member FRAs. Realistically however, it is likely to be some years before sufficient funds are accumulated to permit any significant reductions.

McCloud / Sargeant Pension Case - The Authority is aware of the recent lodging of the “injury to feelings” claim concerning the transitional arrangements that were put in place when the 2015 Firefighters’ Pension Scheme came into effect on 1 April 2015. There is currently no date set aside for the case to be heard by the courts, but if the claim is successful it is possible that the Authority may incur a financial impact. At this stage the value and quantum of any impact is unknown.

27. Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

The Authority’s activities expose it to a variety of financial risks:

- Credit risk – the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Authority.
- Liquidity risk – the possibility that the Authority might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments.
- Market risk – the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Authority as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates and stock market movements.
- Re-financing risk – the possibility that the Authority might be requiring to renew a financial instrument at disadvantageous interest rates or terms.

Overall Procedures for Managing Risk

The Authority’s overall risk management procedures focus on the considerable risk and uncertainty in the global financial markets and banking systems. They are therefore structured to ensure suitable controls are in place to minimise these risks. The Authority manages risk by:

- Adherence to the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.
- Adopting a Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Management clauses within its financial regulations.
- Approving annually in advance prudential and treasury indicators which set limits for the Authority’s overall borrowing; the maximum and minimum exposures to fixed and variable interest rates; the maximum and minimum exposures to the maturity structure of its debt; and the maximum exposure to investments maturing beyond one year.
- Approving an Investment Strategy for the forthcoming year setting out the criteria for investment and the selection of counterparties.

The annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 was approved by the Authority in February 2020, and is implemented by the Finance team. The key limits approved were:

- The authorised limit for external borrowings and long term liabilities was set at £22m.
- The operational boundary, or expected level of debt and other long term liabilities during the year, was set at £18m.

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- The maximum amounts of fixed and variable interest rate exposure were set at 100% and 50% respectively.
- No investments would be made for a period in excess of twelve months.

Market Risk

Interest Rate Risk

The Authority is exposed to risks arising from movements in interest rates. The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy aims to mitigate these risks by setting an upper limit of 20% on external debt that can be subject to variable interest rates.

As at 31 March 2021 all borrowing was at fixed interest rates and is carried at amortised cost, therefore movements in interest rates do not impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. Long term borrowing decisions are based on interest rates prevailing at the time and there is a risk that the rate on a loan may be higher than the market rate available in the future.

Investments are also subject to interest rate risk. The Authority's current policy of holding short term fixed rate deposits and variable rate deposits increases its exposure to interest rate movements. However, this is balanced against the Authority's actions to mitigate credit risk. In-year movements in rates will impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

Interest earned on deposits and investments in 2020/21 was £103k which equates to an average rate of 0.21%. For every 0.1% change in interest the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement would have been credited or debited with a further £48k.

Liquidity Risk

The Authority has a comprehensive cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed. If unexpected movements happen, the Authority would call upon the deposits in its call accounts as a first priority. There is no significant risk on which it will be unable to raise finance or meet its commitments under financial instruments. Instead, the risk is that the Authority will need to borrow at a time of unfavourable interest rates. The Authority ensures that the debt is managed to ensure that there is an even maturity profile through a combination of careful planning of new loans taken out and making early repayments (should it be considered economic to do so). The maturity analysis of financial liabilities is as follows:

All figures are in £'000	31 March 2021
Less than one year	424
Between one and two years	300
Between two and five years	701
More than five years	-
Total	1,425

Notes to the Statement of Accounts

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions and from income due to the Authority for services provided. The Authority defines default as the failure of a counterparty to fulfil their obligation of money owed to the Authority. The Authority will only write-off debt where it has exhausted its opportunities for recovering monies. This risk is minimised through the annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy which reflected a level of uncertainty in the year ahead. The Strategy specified the counterparties, the maximum amounts that could be invested with each and the maximum duration of 12 months. Deposits are spread amongst counterparties to further minimise risk as it is unlikely that all counterparties would default at the same time.

No breaches of the Authority's counterparty criteria occurred during the reporting period and the Authority has no evidence to suggest that there will be any losses from non-performance by any of its counterparties.

The Authority's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to its deposits in banks cannot be assessed generally as the risk of any institution failing to make interest payments or repay the principal sum will be specific to each individual institution. At the 31 March 2021 the Authority had £2.95m deposited with the Debt Management Office, a secure Government-backed asset. There was also £6.77m deposited in instant access accounts, £10m deposited in Money Markets, £16.35m in notice accounts and £12m in fixed term.

It is considered unlikely that these entities would be unable to meet these commitments, as all of the Authority's investment counterparties are classified as low credit risk. Despite the low credit risk there remains some degree of risk of recoverability. IFRS9 requires restatement of prior year figures, based on expected losses. For the Authority investments with banks, building societies and Money Markets is calculated using historic risk of default percentages provided by the Authority's Treasury Advisors, for 12 month expected losses. All of the Authority's investments are less than 12 months. Trade Debtors always carry some degree of irrecoverability, expected losses are calculated under the simplified approach using a provision matrix with expected values based on historic default. The expected losses calculations as at 31 March 2021 resulted in a total immaterial figure. The CIPFA Code states that "accounting policies need not be applied if the effect of applying them would be immaterial" the effect of the expected losses have therefore not been shown in the accounts.

Apart from the contract to supply services to Eurotunnel, the Authority does not receive a significant amount of income for goods and services provided. The amounts outstanding from debtors at the end of the year can be analysed by age as follows:

All figures are in £'000	31 March 2021
Less than three months	497
Three to six months	37
Six months to one year	-
More than one year	-
Total	534

Firefighters' Pension Fund Account

28. Firefighters' Pension Fund Account

The Authority contracts with Local Pensions Partnership (LPP) for the administration of the Firefighters' Pension Fund. A separate ledger account is maintained for the Firefighters' Pension Fund, there are no investment assets and the fund is balanced to nil each year by the receipt of a top up grant from central Government.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21 Pension Fund	2019/20 Pension Fund
Contributions receivable from:		
Fire Authority:		
Contributions in relation to pensionable pay	-8,327	-8,116
Early retirements (ill health)	-351	-184
Other	-278	-88
Firefighters' contributions	-3,703	-3,585
	-12,659	-11,973
Transfers in from other authorities	-146	-33
Benefits payable:		
Pensions	20,511	19,813
Commutation and lump sum retirement benefits	3,137	6,549
Lump sum death benefits	-	93
	23,648	26,455
Transfers out to other authorities	93	-
Net amount payable for the year	10,936	14,449
Top-up grant payable by the Government	-10,936	-14,449
	-	-

The accounting statement does not take into account liabilities to pay ongoing pensions and other benefits beyond 31 March 2021. Details of the Authority's long-term pension obligations are shown in Note 25 to the Statement of Accounts.

Firefighters' Pension Fund Net Assets Statement

The statement below identifies the Firefighters' Pension Fund assets and liabilities that are included in the Authority's Balance Sheet.

All figures are in £'000	2020/21	2019/20
Current assets:		
Contributions due from Fire Authority	106	125
Top-up receivable from the Government	2,003	3,413
Current liabilities:		
Unpaid pension benefits	-142	-596
Other current liabilities ¹	-1,967	-2,942
Total	-	-

¹ This reflects the extent to which the Pension Fund Account assets and liabilities impact on the Authority's cash position.

Glossary of Terms

Budget

A statement defining the Authority's plans over a specified period of time, expressed in financial terms.

Billing Authority

The KMFRA is a precepting authority with Medway and Kent District and Borough Councils acting as agents on behalf of the Authority to collect Council Tax and Business Rates (Non-Domestic). These authorities are collectively referred to as billing authorities.

Capital Expenditure

This is expenditure relating to the provision and improvement of property, plant and equipment assets such as land, buildings and vehicles that have a useful life in excess of one year.

Capital Receipts

The proceeds arising from the sale of fixed assets that can be used to finance capital expenditure or repay borrowing.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

CIPFA is the accounting body that provides accounting guidance to the public sector. The guidance is defined as 'proper practices' and has statutory backing.

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (the Code)

This is the annual guidance issued by CIPFA that specifies the principles and accounting practices required to give a 'true and fair' view of the financial position, financial performance and cash flow of local authority accounts.

Collection Fund

This account reflects the statutory requirement for billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund, showing the transactions of the billing authority in relation to Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates and illustrates the way in which these have been distributed to Preceptors and the General Fund.

Component Valuation

The Authority has adopted a component valuation approach to valuing property assets. This means that for valuation purposes a building is broken down into its main constituent elements (roof, bay doors, boiler, etc.) and each element is separately valued and its remaining life estimated.

Current Value

This valuation method recognises the value of an asset for its service potential in its current use.

Depreciation

Depreciation is the charge made for fixed assets which represents the extent to which the asset has been consumed over the course of the year.

Glossary of Terms

Employee Expenditure

This includes the salaries and wages of employees together with national insurance, employer pension contributions and all other pay-related allowances. Training expenses and recruitment costs are also included.

ESMCP (Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme)

The Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) set up by the Home Office, will replace the current communication service provided by Airwave. The new service will be called the Emergency Services Network (ESN). Through utilising the latest mobile technology in 4G and LTE, ESN will ensure the functionality, coverage, security and availability needs of the UK's emergency services are fully met.

Fair Value

This is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction.

General Fund Balance

The General Fund Balance is the description given in the Code to those reserves held by an Authority that are not earmarked for specific purposes and is more commonly described as the General Reserve.

Government Grants

Funding that is received from Government that is paid for from its own tax income. Grants may be general or provided for specific purposes.

Impairment Charge

Where there is a fall in the value of a fixed asset due to a change in economic circumstances or because an event has occurred which has had serious impact on the value. The extent to which an asset can be used (e.g. a fire) may be impacted and therefore the fall in value is regarded as an impairment and a charge is made to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Like depreciation charges, the impairment charge is only notional and it does not impact on the amount to be met from Council Tax.

Infrastructure Plan

The Authority's medium term expenditure plan drawing together all revenue and capital expenditure to invest in and maintain the Authority's property, vehicle, IS/IT and operational equipment assets.

Intangible Assets

Intangible assets are assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled through custody or legal rights. Expenditure on software or software licences are examples of intangible assets.

International Accounting Standard (IAS) and International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS)

These are globally accepted accounting standards which set out the correct accounting treatment for an organisation's financial transactions.

Glossary of Terms

MHCLG

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is the UK Government department for housing, communities and local government in England, formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

The amount that the Authority must charge to the revenue account each year for repayment of debt.

Non-Domestic Rates

Commonly referred to as business rates this income is collected by the billing authorities and a proportion is paid over to the Authority.

Net Cost of Services

Comprises all expenditure minus all income (excluding precept, capital grant, and reserve transfers).

Past Service Pension Costs

This represents the change in the present value of the defined benefit obligation for employee service in prior periods resulting from a pension scheme plan amendment or a curtailment (a significant reduction by the Authority in the number of employees covered by the plan).

Precept

A Precept is the levying of a rate by one authority which is collected by another. The Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority precepts upon the Kent District and Medway Council collection funds for its share of Council Tax income.

Public Works Loans Board

A Government-controlled agency that provides a source of borrowing for public authorities.

Related Party Transaction

A related party transaction is the transfer of assets or liabilities or the performance of services by, to, or for, a related party irrespective of whether a charge is made.

Revenue Expenditure

Expenditure to meet the continuing cost of services including employee expenses, premises and vehicle running expenses, purchase of materials and capital financing charges.

Revenue Expenditure Funded From Capital Under Statute

This is expenditure that would ordinarily be regarded as revenue expenditure because it does not give rise to a tangible asset or provide any ongoing benefit to the Authority. As the Government has allowed capital resources to be used to finance this expenditure it is charged to the revenue account but any capital grant provided will be treated as revenue grant and credited to the revenue account.

SECAmb

South East Cost Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust is part of the National Health Service.

Glossary of Terms

Voluntary Revenue Provision

Any additional amounts charged to revenue for the repayment of debt that is in excess of the minimum revenue provision required by statute.

Index to the Notes to the Statement of Accounts

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Summary Financial Statements 2020/21

This Summary of Accounts shows where the Authority spent its money in the financial year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and gives an overview of its financial position at the end of March 2021.

The figures are taken from the full statement of accounts available on the Authority's website www.kent.fire-uk.org

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Summary Accounts 2020/21

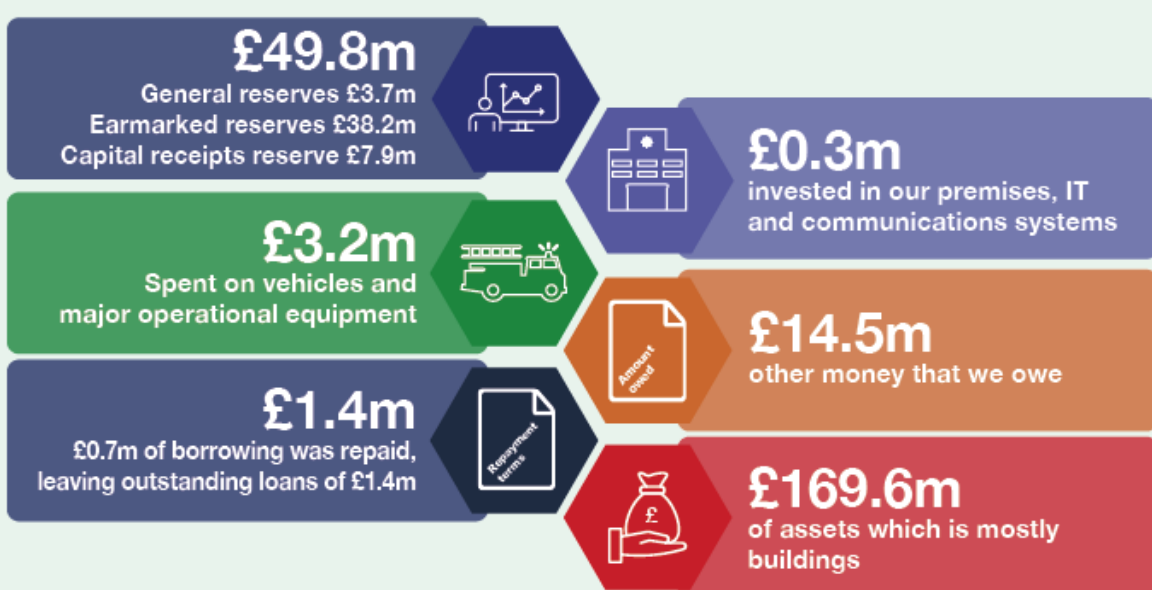
Money we received in 20/21...



What we spent the money on in 20/21...



Reserves, capital, liabilities and assets...



Summary of Accounts 2020/21

This summary statement compares a breakdown of the money we planned to spend at the start of the year (budget) with what we actually spent and explains the changes. If we have over or underspend in certain areas, we have explained why.

As well as our annual expenditure, this statement also includes information about our longer-term financial sustainability. This is important so that you know the resources we have available to provide services into the future. This summary shows you what we own and what we owe to others, and what we have put aside to make sure we can deliver services beyond this year.

This information is consistent with the reported audited accounts, which our external auditors have reviewed. A full set of this Authority's Statement of Accounts is available on our website www.kent.fire-uk.org

About Kent Fire and Rescue Authority

The Authority not only fights fires but deals with a range of emergencies from road traffic collisions, floods, explosions and chemical spillages, but we also support the Ambulance service at some Emergency Medical incidents, if we can get there sooner than our ambulance colleagues. Preventative work is also undertaken to ensure the public stay safe in their environment and this can be a range of activities such as safe and well visits, road safety advice to schools and colleges, as well as advice and support to local businesses.

Where did we get our money from?

The fire authority gets money from three main sources: council tax, business rates and grants from government.

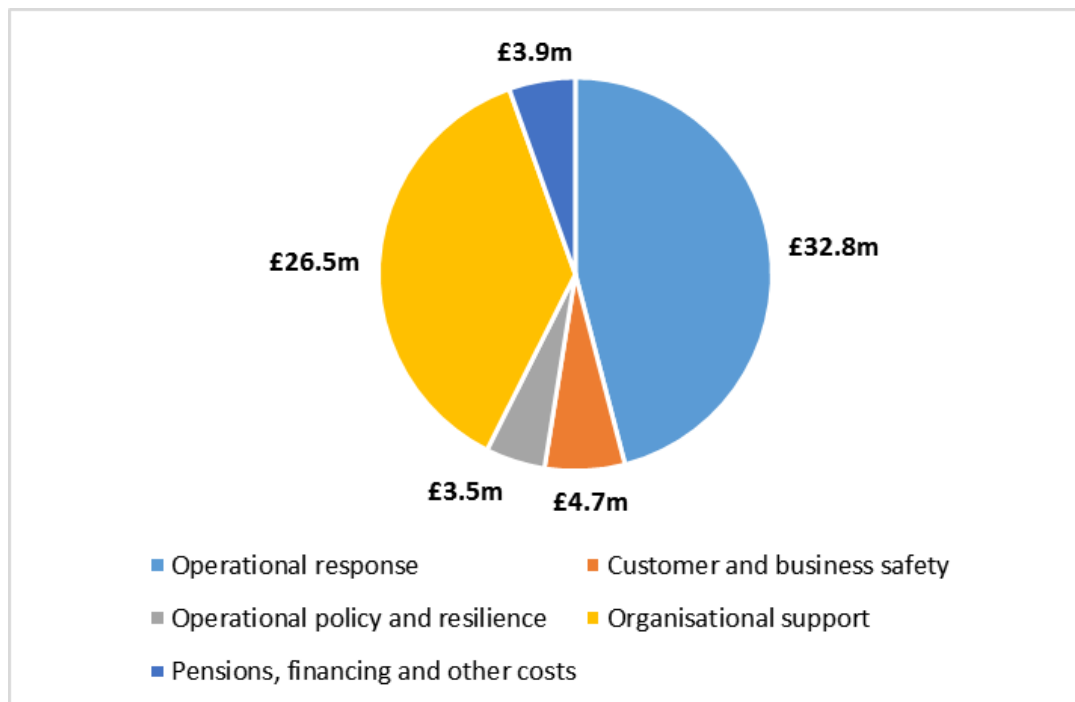
We have to make sure that when we set the budget for the year, we can afford to pay for the services we offer and provide. This includes any plans we make where we need to include longer-term commitments. A fire authority needs to balance its budget, and setting council tax is an important part of this process.

Our total funding is £74.3m and we spend this on providing support and services to our local population, estimated at 1,581,600.

Summary Income	Amount £'000
Revenue Support Grant (central government funding)	6,422
Non-domestic Rates*	16,566
Council Tax	51,270
Total Income	74,258

*Non-Domestic Rates is the Authority's share of Business Rates collected by Medway and Kent District Councils plus Top-up grants from central Government.

Where the money we received for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 was spent



Summary Revenue Expenditure (Day to Day)

Expenditure

Operational Response (frontline response)	32,805
Customer and Business Safety (Keeping you safe at home and at work)	4,669
Operational Policy and Resilience (Continuous improvement and assurance)	3,510
Organisational Support (Supporting frontline services)	26,493
Pensions, Financing and Other Costs	3,944

Total Revenue Expenditure	71,421
Budget available for the year	74,258
Net Underspend for 2020/21	-2,837

Of the £71m nearly 84% of expenditure related to employee expenses with the remainder spent on operating costs.

A Summary of each of the headings is provided below:

- **Operational Response:** Firefighting and Rescue Services, Control Room
- **Customer and Business Safety:** Building Safety, Business Safety and Community Safety
- **Operational Policy and Resilience:** Operational pre-planning, emergency planning, technical rescue, new dimension activity, Eurotunnel and other Channel Tunnel related activity.
- **Organisational Support:** Corporate Management and Business Support, Human Resources and training, Policy and Performance, Communications and

Marketing, Member Allowances and Member support, Property and Procurement, Information Systems, Engineering and Transport, Finance and Insurance

- **Pensions, Financing and other costs:** Pension costs, cost of capital charges, borrowing costs and Infrastructure funding

What were the differences

Explanations for the differences between what we budgeted for and what we spent

Explanation	Difference £'000
Decrease in pay, pensions and other employee costs	-2,234
Decrease in bought in services and professional fees	-186
Decrease in Information Communication Technology	-116
Decrease in printing, stationary and general office expenses	-81
Decrease in PPE and workwear	-52
Increase in income	-41
Other net underspends	-127
Total difference between budget and spend	-2,837

Summary Financial Position

Kent Fire and Rescue uses your money to provide necessary local services. The summary financial position below represents a summary of our financial position at a single point in time which for our accounts is 31 March 2021. Each year it sets out what the authority owns and how much it is owed, and owes to others, and the resources it has left to support the provision of future services.

Below we show the authority's financial position at the financial year end, which is a summary of the balance sheet in the audited accounts. This information helps to assess if the authority has a sustainable financial position and is able to support and maintain services on an on-going basis. The balance sheet shows the value of the Authority's assets and liabilities at the year end

Summary Financial Positions	31-Mar-20 £'000	31-Mar-21 £'000
What we own (held as 'assets')	161,282	169,592
What we owe (held as 'liabilities')	-835,723	-1,044,226
Net Financial Positions	-674,441	-874,634

The net financial position is held in reserves as follows:

	31-Mar-20 £'000	31-Mar-21 £'000
General reserves	-3,510	-3,710
Earmarked (usable) reserves	-29,899	-38,221
Capital receipts reserves	-9,234	-7,875
Unusable reserves	717,084	924,440
Total Reserves	674,441	874,634

General Reserves - need to be maintained to enable the Authority to meet any urgent and unforeseen costs that arise and cannot otherwise be accommodated.

Earmarked Usable Reserves - this is money held by the Authority for specific purposes. This includes money for future station improvements, the replacement of large items of equipment, the purchase of vehicles and improvements in I.T.

Capital Receipts Reserve - this is money raised from the sale of assets.

Unusable reserves - this reserve reflects accounting adjustments that the Authority undertakes in relation to assets and liabilities so as not to impact on the Council Tax payer

Financial Sustainability – The ability to plan for the future

We have to plan for the long term to ensure that we can continue to deliver our services in future years so it is important that our financial sustainability is robust.

Kent Fire and Rescue has a fully developed four year Medium Term Financial Plan and a 10 year Capital spend plan which looks at risks and potential future demands of the service.

The biggest risks identified are likely to be:

- **Maintaining existing Government Funding** – the Government are due in the future to review how funding is allocated across the fire sector and to release a white paper on fire services reform. The Authority continues to respond to all funding consultations and supports the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) submissions to the Home Office on behalf of the sector.
- **Council Tax base does not increase** – the Authority's costs increase year on year and in order to fund those increases the Authority assumes an increase in the number of properties that will be available in Kent from which Council Tax can be collected. Recent events with regard to Covid-19 have seen for the first time a reduction in the Council Tax base of those properties that pay full council tax, this is due to an increase in the number of home owners claiming Council Tax support. The Authority continues to monitor this with the Districts across Kent to help us plan for future years.

Raising Debt to Finance Investment

Fire authorities can borrow to invest in property or other infrastructure that supports the delivery of services, but they must ensure that they can pay this amount back. This Authority has an underlying need to borrow to finance our assets of £2.798m and must set aside sufficient resources each year so it can pay back its borrowing, and this must be affordable when compared to its annual income.

The Authority did not plan to fund any capital expenditure from borrowing in 2020/21. In line with previous years, the Authority continues to use temporary surplus cash balances instead of borrowing from external sources to fund unfinanced capital expenditure from earlier years. A loan of £700k matured during 2020/21 so was repaid reducing the level of outstanding loans as at 31 March 2021 to £1.425m.

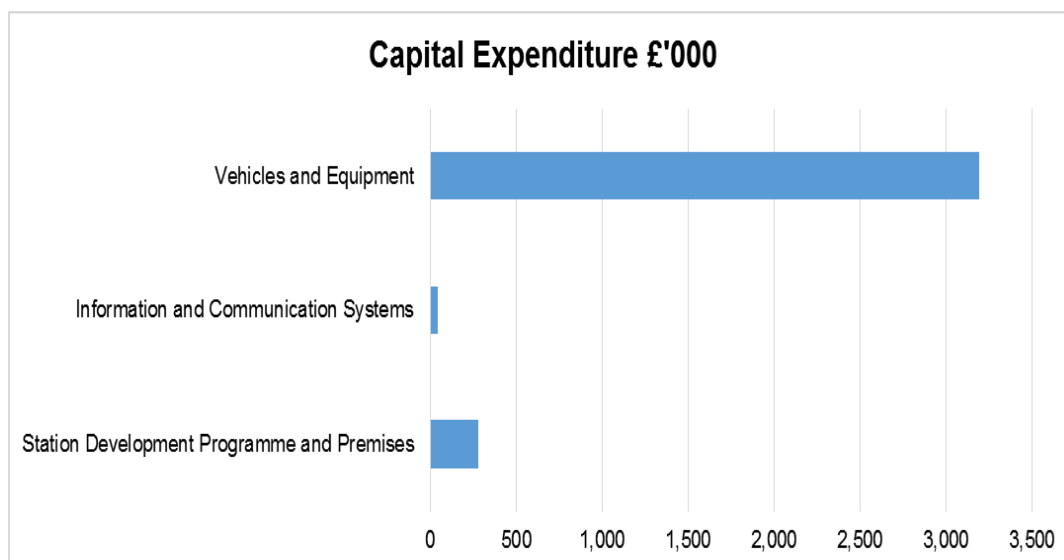
Capital Investment

During 2020/21 the Authority spent £3.5m on capital projects, most of which was spent on IT Systems, vehicles and equipment. Capital expenditure generally represents money spent by the Authority on buying, upgrading and improving its long-term assets, such as its vehicles, buildings and IT infrastructure.



Capital Expenditure

Expenditure	Amount £'000
Station Development Programme and Premises	279
Information and Communication Systems	44
Vehicles and Equipment	3,194
Total Capital Spend	3,517



By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021
Subject: FINANCIAL UPDATE 2021/22
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report is the first for the 2021/22 financial year and as such it provides a brief overview of forecast spend for the year against the revenue and capital budgets, an update on a number of grants that have been confirmed for the current financial year, a treasury update and a number of other financial related issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Agree that sufficient funding is drawn down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to meet the cost of the 2021/22 pay award (paragraph 4 and 5 refer);
2. Note the remaining contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Alison Kilpatrick – Director Finance & Corporate Services
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext. 8262
EMAIL: Alison.kilpatrick@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Budgets for 2021/22

1. **Revenue Budget** - On 23 February 2021 Members agreed a net revenue budget of £72.027m for 2021/22. As notified to Members at the April 2021 Authority meeting the Chief Executive agreed, in consultation with the Chair, to amend the net revenue budget for 2021/22 to £71.573m following confirmation of the treatment of the Local Tax Income Guarantee Scheme Grant. It has since been necessary to process a number of budget adjustments, and although the budget adjustments have no effect on the overall net revenue budget of £71.573m, they will have an impact on the Functional and Subjective analysis of the budget. Notable changes include:
 - An additional £550k of revenue contributions to capital, offset by an increased transfer from reserves of the same amount, allocated to fund urgent roof repairs, as agreed by Members on 27 April 2021.
 - An additional £131k of revenue contributions has been transferred to capital, offset by an increased transfer from reserves of the same amount, as some vehicle purchases are now expected to cost more than originally anticipated.
 - Rephasing £1.006m in revenue contributions to fund capital, offset by a reduction in transfers from reserves of the same amount, due to delayed expenditure on some vehicle purchases which have slipped to 2022/23 (see paragraph 5).
 - Rephasing £278k for the Improvement of Customer and Premises Risk Management project budget, offset by a reduced transfer from reserves of the same amount, where expenditure has slipped to 2022/23 following delays in phase 4 contract negotiations.
 - Rephasing £149k set aside for the Workforce Planning (Time and Attendance) System project budget, offset by a reduced transfer from reserves of the same amount, where some expenditure is now not expected to be incurred until 2022/23.
 - A technical adjustment to re-apportion the grant income budget (£3.536m), in relation to the increase in employer firefighter pension contributions, to the relevant service headings.
2. Revenue budgets will also be adjusted for slippage from 2020/21 to 2021/22, reflected in the rolling budget reserve and Infrastructure reserve, as part of the year end adjustments in preparing the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

3. **Revenue Outturn Forecast** - It is still early in the financial year, so currently forecast spend is expected to be broadly in line with the revised budget. It has been highlighted that slippage on the Improvement of Customer and Premises Risk Management project and the Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) project means that funding set aside in the base budget to meet ongoing day to day costs of these projects, once they become business as usual, will not be required in 2021/22 (£96k). Spend will continue to be monitored closely over the coming months and a more detailed report will be presented to the Authority at its next meeting in October.
4. **Pay Awards in 2021/22** - Members may recall that the budget for 2021/22 does not include provision to fund a pay award, due to the fact that the Government had announced a proposed pause on public sector pay increases in 2021/22. However, the NJC has recently agreed a 1.5% increase for operational colleagues, effective from the 1 July 2021. Discussions remain ongoing nationally with regard to the corporate / green book pay award, although the employers side have made an offer of a 1.5% award (which would be payable from the 1 April) but at this stage this offer has not been accepted..
5. Members are therefore asked to agree that sufficient funding to cover the cost of the 2021/22 pay awards is drawn down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve. Members will be aware that this Earmarked reserve is set aside to fund one-off unplanned in-year pressures if they cannot be met from existing resources within the base budget for that year. If all staff groups are awarded a 1.5% increase, then there will be a cost pressure in-year of approximately £740k. In the event that all pay awards are confirmed at 1.5% in 2021/22 then there will be an additional base budget pressure of around £900k in 2022/23, which will be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-2026.
6. **Capital Budget** - In February Members agreed a capital budget of £10.406m for 2021/22, with some £6.223m of this total being spent on vehicles and appliances, and £3.595m on the Live Fire refurbishment at Ashford station (with the remainder on other minor premises works (£74k) and the rollout of MDTs (£514k)).
7. However, the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Programme (VERP) is now highlighting that it is unlikely that a number of front line appliances will be procured this year, mainly due to chassis delivery timeframes extending from 6 months to 10 months. A decision has also been taken to split the purchase of the replacement pool fleet between 2021/22 and 2022/23, as work is ongoing to evaluate the effect of new ways of working going forward, which is likely to result in a reduced number of pool vehicles being required. As a consequence, these two issues have resulted in £2.901m of slippage to 2022/23. Additionally, there have been delays in the Ashford rebuild project and as such a budget of only £650k is now expected to be required in 2021/22, resulting in slippage of £2.945m to 2022/23 and a realigning of the spend profile over the whole project. Once the slippage on the VERP and the Ashford rebuild

project is accounted for, along with the additional £550k allocated for urgent roof repairs and various other minor adjustments, there has been a net reduction in the capital budget of £5.227m, from £10.406m to £5.179m. This has resulted in a reduction of £274k in the forecast use of revenue reserves to fund capital expenditure and the planned use of £4.953m of capital receipts, both are no longer required to fund capital in the 2021/22 financial year.

8. The reduction in the 2021/22 capital budget means that cash balances are now expected to be much higher, during the year, than initially anticipated. Budgets and forecast expenditure will be closely monitored alongside treasury activity to ensure that any potential treasury issues are identified as early as possible.

Grants Update

9. **Covid-19 Grants** - On 27 April 2021 the Authority received an additional £199k government grant from the Home Office Fire Contingency Fund, taking the total additional support received to £1.851m since the beginning of the pandemic. Up to the end of the 2020/21 financial year, additional costs of £1.421m had been incurred leaving £430k available to fund additional Covid-19 related costs in 2021/22.
10. **Additional Grant for Protection Work 2021/22** - The Government recently advised Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) that a total of £14m worth of additional fire protection funding would be made available to all FRAs for 2021/22, to further increase the capability and capacity within fire protection.
11. The potential value of the Authority's share of this grant has been confirmed at £480k, with 50% (£240k) paid upfront on 18 May 2021, with further funds to be paid at the end of the 2021/22 financial year, once actual expenditure on this grant related activity is finalised at the end of the year. This grant has quite specific guidelines for its use and as such we are able to utilise the majority to offset spending on the Premises Risk Management project and as such this will free up the equivalent funding resource to be utilised on other areas of activity.
12. **Road Safety Trust (RST) and Department for Transport (DfT) Grants** - Two new grants are expected to be received in 2021/22 from the Road Safety Trust (£28k) and Department for Transport (up to £100k) to cover Pre-driver Theatre & Workshop Education Research (PdTWER).
13. In April 2020 it was confirmed that the grant applications had been successful but, following confirmation of a 12 month delay to the practical aspects of the project, but work was not expected to begin until the start of the 2021/22 financial year. The grants will be paid to the Authority based upon the regular submission of satisfactory progress reports along with details of eligible expenditure incurred.

Other Financial Issues

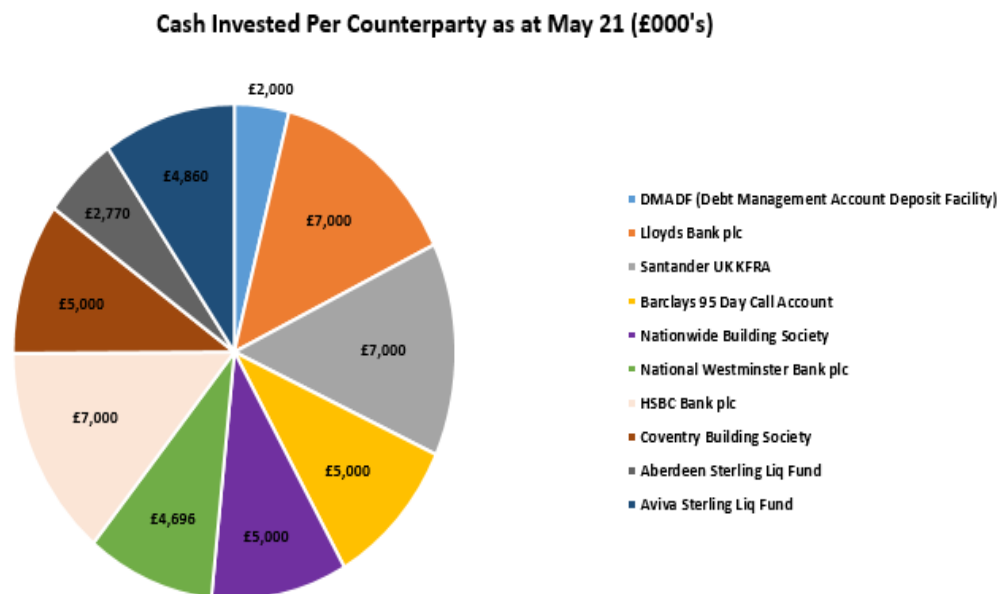
14. **Update on the Redman Review** - An update on MHCLG's response to Sir Tony Redmond's independent review into the effectiveness of external audit and transparency of financial reporting in local authorities has recently been issued. Of the 23 original recommendations, these were grouped into 5 themes:
 - Action to support immediate market stability
 - Consideration of system leadership options
 - Enhancing the functioning of local audit, and the governance for responding to its findings
 - Improving transparency of local authorities' accounts to the public
 - Action to further consider the functioning of local audit for smaller bodies
15. There is a recommendation that the current audit fee structure be revised to ensure that more appropriate levels of resources are deployed to meet audit requirements and that fees more accurately reflect the costs incurred. Another key recommendation was the establishment of a new independent body, the Office of Local Audit and Regulation (OLAR), responsible for procurement, contract management, regulation, and oversight of local audit. A White Paper has also been published setting out details of how the Government proposes to establish a new regulator, the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA) to replace the Financial Reporting Council (FRC).
16. **Update on the CIPFA Prudential Code Consultation** - CIPFA has now published its response on the review of The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. As expected the Code will be updated to strengthen provisions around borrowing for yield, following growing concerns over local government commercial property investments. CIPFA intends to publish the new Code in December 2021.
17. **Section 13/16 Agreement** - Members may recall that this Authority has an agreement in place with London Fire Brigade (LFB) which sets out the basis on which charges will be levied for any cross border operational support that they provide on behalf of Kent Fire and Rescue or vice versa. This is a reciprocal arrangement and we therefore contra-off any cross border charges that we levy when supporting LFB.
18. Previously the hourly rate was £346 for appliance support, however this rate will be increasing to £352 from the 1 April 2021. In 2020/21 there were 102 hours of support provide by LFB to Kent, offset by 66 hours of operational support provide across the

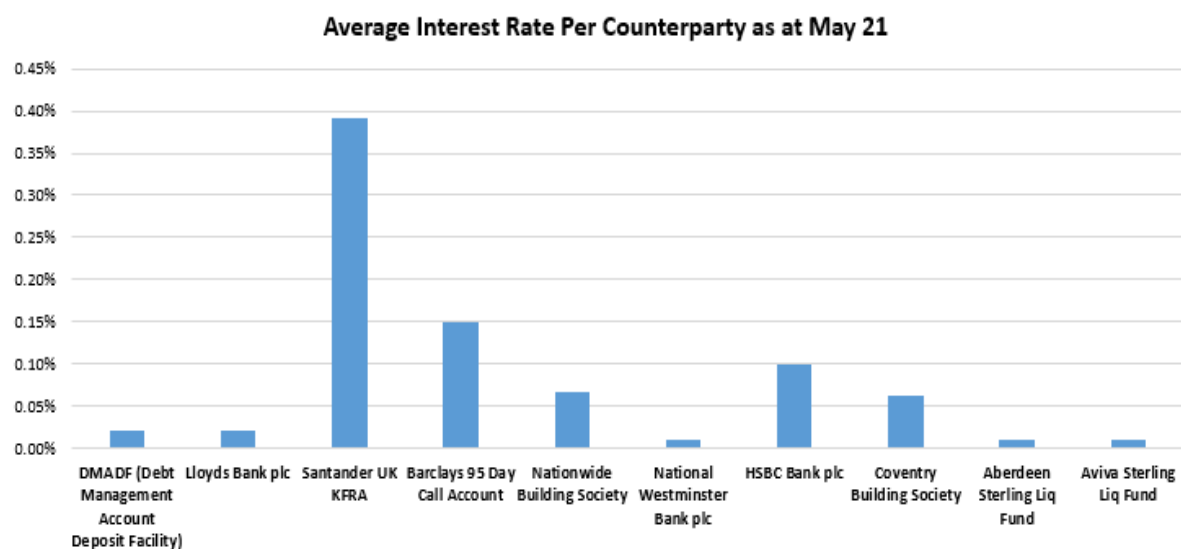
border from Kent to London, resulting in a net cost to us of approximately £12k. In line with the Authority's Policy, we will only charge for cross border activity, if the receiving authority levy a charge on this Authority for our support in their county.

19. **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 2020/21

20. **Treasury Management** - As at the end of May 2021, the Authority has a cash balance of £50.326m invested. The pie chart below shows the cash invested per counterparty, which has a forecast investment income for the year of £42k. The average interest rate continues to be low and we are currently earning an average interest rate of 0.14% on our cash balances - this is earning just under £3k a month. The bar chart details current interest rate levels paid on these deposits.





IMPACT ASSESSMENT

21. All financial implications associated with servicing this year's budget can be contained within the Authority's existing resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

22. Members are asked to:
- 22.1 Agree that sufficient funding is drawn down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to meet the cost of the 2021/22 pay award (paragraph 4 and 5 refer);
- 22.2 Note the contents of the report.

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By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021

Subject: GOVERNANCE AND POLICY UPDATE

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report provides Members with an update regarding three governance issues. Firstly, on 10 June 2021, the Government issued further guidance relating to the McCloud/Sargeant pensions case and the payment of Immediate Detriment cases. This report provides Members with an update on the current position and the proposed next steps for the Authority.

The Authority's Social Media Policy has recently been refreshed and is brought to Members for consideration.

Finally, an update is provided on the development of the Transparency in Supply Chains Statement, which is part of the roll out nationally of the Modern Slavery Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Approve that the Authority implements Immediate Detriment under McCloud/Sargeant where sufficient information is available to do so (paragraph 11 refers);
2. Approve the Social Media Policy (paragraph 14 and **Appendix 1** refer);
3. Approve that the Transparency in Supply Chains Statement be processed as urgent business when available by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Authority (paragraph 15 refers).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Karen Irvine, Assistant Director, HR and Learning
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 extension 8298
EMAIL: Karen.irvine@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS:

COMMENTS

McCloud/ Sargeant Case Update

*Lead/Contact Officer: Karen Irvine, Assistant Director, Human Resources and Learning
01622 692121 ext 8298, karen.irvine@kent.fire-uk.org*

1. Members were provided with a detailed summary of the current position with regards to the McCloud/Sergeant case at the meeting held on 27 April 2021. At that stage, Members agreed two actions which were:
 - (a) That those colleagues who were due to taper in the period between April 2021 and 31 March 2022, would not be tapered across before 1 April 2022;
 - (b) That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to decide whether to progress the payment and recalculation of Immediate Detriment cases, should sufficient information be available to do so, prior to the Authority meeting in July.
2. Members may wish to note that the first action point has been progressed however, to date no Immediate Detriment cases have been actioned.
3. **Published guidance:** On 10 June 2021 the Local Government Association released additional guidance to employers to support them to apply Immediate Detriment in relation to the McCloud/Sargeant case. Immediate Detriment is defined as those cases where benefits are not yet in payment and where the individual is due to retire in the coming months. It does not apply to scheme members who are already in receipt of their pension payment.
4. The guidance provides details of the information that fire services must provide to scheme members in order for them to make an informed choice as to whether they wish to take their pensions accrued during the remedy period (1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022) under their legacy scheme (either the 1992 or 2006 Scheme), rather than under the 2015 Scheme.
5. Each scheme member will need to make their own decision on whether to take benefits from their legacy scheme or not. In doing so, they must recognise that this decision may impact their tax liabilities, in particular their annual tax allowance charges on the increase in their pension savings or possibly their lifetime allowance. Fire Services are told through the guidance that they need to consider what support they can provide to scheme members to revisit these assessments. It is important however for Members to be aware that Officers cannot legally provide tax advice to its employees. Due to the complexities associated with the annual and life allowance tax charges, we will be seeking to appoint the services of a professionally qualified

financial adviser who will provide advice to those in both the fire and local government schemes who may be impacted as a result of this case, tax liabilities and potential subsequent legislative changes.

6. The guidance confirms that should any tax liability be incurred through the annual allowance. Fire services will be able to offer “scheme pays” i.e. the ability to offset this charge against retirement lump sums. This provides resolution to an outstanding question as scheme pays is normally time bound to the tax year the charge was incurred.
7. The guidance recommends that scheme members should be required to provide written confirmation of their choice of which scheme they wish to draw their benefits from, and once this is received payment can be made. It will also set out that the individual will carry the impact of any future financial liability which may arise as a result of their chosen option. Those services that have already brought the Immediate Detriment case into payment have been using a declaration that has been drawn up with their legal advisers. Working with our pensions administrators, we have agreed to use our legal advisers (Invicta Law) to draw up a similar declaration, which will be used by all clients of our pensions administrators.
8. **Unresolved issues:** There are a number of unresolved issues which may prevent or cause fire services hesitancy in applying this guidance. These are:
 - (a) If individuals are returning to the legacy scheme, their contributions will be higher than those deducted for the 2015 scheme. Contributions can be taken through pay, even though they relate to previous tax years, which will mean that the tax relief due on these contributions can be offset. If contributions are more than actual pay the balance can be taken from the retirement lump sums. However, tax relief cannot be applied against a lump sum payment. There is currently no process by which individuals can reclaim this lost tax relief. This will not prevent the processing of the pension but individuals will have to await advice from Her Majesty's Treasury as to how and when they can re-claim this tax relief.
 - (b) Some members by virtue of age and service would qualify for a “contribution holiday” under the legacy 1992 scheme having reached 30 years' service before aged 50. These members may also be taper members who have paid contributions into the 2015 scheme after their 30-year anniversary date. The position of applying tax relief and interest on contributions underpayments or refunds for these members is yet to be confirmed. Therefore, these cases cannot be progressed until further information is received.
 - (c) Some affected scheme members may have transferred benefits from an external provided into the 2015 Scheme. Rules in the 1992 scheme do not permit

transfers in after 5 April 2006, when the scheme closed. This transfer will have to remain in the 2015 scheme until such time as the new regulations are issued. If transferred it would be considered an unauthorised payment for tax purposes, which would mean the member incurring a tax charge up to 55% and a scheme sanction charge being applied. This will not prevent the application of the guidance and progressing with payment under the Immediate Detriment. However, individuals affected will have to wait for their transfer benefits to be re-calculated into the 1992 scheme until further guidance is received.

- (d) Some scheme members may have elected to make voluntary contributions to purchase “additional pension” in the 2015 scheme. For members who elect to take their full benefits from their legacy scheme, these contributions will need to be converted to the equivalent value of additional pension that could have been purchased in the 1992 scheme. However, there is no provision within the 1992 scheme to purchase “additional pension”. These cases will be able to be progressed but as with “transfers in” these values will need to remain in the 2015 scheme and be re-visited once the new regulations are issued.
- 9. It can be seen that there are still some unanswered questions, however it is now possible to progress most Immediate Detriment cases, with the exception of cases with “contributions holidays”. Also on the understanding that due to the 1992 scheme not having the provision from “transfer ins” or the buying of “additional pensions”, scheme members will have to make the choice as to whether they want to wait for further guidance or progress and revisit these elements later.
 - 10. Discussions have started with our pensions administrators to discuss how to apply the guidance. They already have a project team set up for implementation of this matter. It is likely that it will take approximately two to three months to get the process and documentations in place, which will mean it is unlikely that anyone will be able to retire under the ruling before late September 2021.
 - 11. With the further guidance and a clearer understanding of outstanding issues we would ask that Members agree to progress the calculation of Immediate Detriment cases where sufficient information is available to do so.

Social Media Policy

Lead/Contact Officer: Karen Irvine, Assistant Director, Human Resources and Learning
01622 692121 ext 8298, karen.irvine@kent.fire-uk.org

- 12. We recognise social media is a key communications tool and many people that work for us enjoy using platforms in their personal time. However, the law surrounding use of social media is very complex and it balances obligations placed on everyone that works for us under contracts of employment, with the rights to a private life and the freedom of expression.

13. The purpose of the Social Media Policy is to encourage and enable everyone to use social and other digital media appropriately, and to remove any risk associated with identifying individuals online as employees of Kent Fire and Rescue Service. Compliance with this Policy safeguards the Authority from reputational damage and protects everyone that works for us from the less positive aspects of social media, such as trolling and hate crime.
14. The revised Policy is attached at **Appendix 1** for Members' consideration.

Modern Slavery Policy Update

Lead/Contact Officer: James Finch, Assistant Director, Corporate Services
01622 692121 ext 8453, james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org

15. Members will recall considering the Modern Slavery Policy at the meeting held on 23 February 2021. Part of the requirements of the Modern Slavery Policy is the publication of a Transparency in Supply Chains Statement. Completing the Statement in time for the publication of these papers was sadly not achievable. In light of the deadline to publish and submit to a national portal by 1 September 2021, Members are asked to approve that the Statement be dealt with by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

16. To continue to not apply the outcome of the Employment Tribunal would mean that we would continue to discriminate on the grounds of age. Section 61 of the Equality Act 2010 prohibits fire services from acting in a manner which discriminates on the grounds of age and it prioritises that obligation over other provisions in the pension scheme which would oblige them to act in that way. In addition, under Section 62 of the Equality Act 2010, the fire services have vested in them the power to pass a resolution making non-discrimination alterations to the scheme of which they are managers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17. Members are requested to:
 - 17.1 Approve that the Authority implements Immediate Detriment under McCloud/Sargeant where sufficient information is available to do so (paragraph 11 refers);
 - 17.2 Approve the Social Media Policy (paragraph 14 and **Appendix 1** refer);

- 17.3 Approve that the Transparency in Supply Chains Statement be processed as urgent business when available by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Authority (paragraph 15 refers).

Human Resources and Learning



Social Media Policy

Author	Dominika Kimber	The current job title of the main author.	HR Business Manager
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Introduction

We recognise social media is a key communications tool and many staff enjoy using platforms in their personal time. Compliance with this policy safeguards us from reputational damage and protects you from the less positive aspects of social media, such as trolling and hate crime.

This policy applies to everyone who works and volunteers for us, including all employees, volunteers, and stakeholders including consultants, contractors, and any agency staff, and also members of the Authority.

The purpose of this guidance is to encourage and enable everyone to use social and other digital media appropriately, and to remove any risk associated with identifying your role and employment with KFRS online.

Legal Consequences

The law surrounding use of social media is very complex and it balances obligations placed on you under your contract of employment with your rights to a private life and the freedom of expression.

Key statutory acts relating to this policy include:

Equality Act 2010

You can be deemed to have acted 'in the course of your employment' if your conduct and actions are closely related to your employment. If your acts cannot be regarded as part of your ordinary course of employment or are in breach of our procedures, these will be seen as unauthorised and you are likely to be liable.

Human Rights Act 1998

Article 8 gives a 'right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence'. Case law suggests that everyone has a reasonable expectation of privacy in the workplace.

Article 10 European Convention on Human Rights provides, that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions.

Although you have freedom of expression, you also have a duty to behave responsibly and to respect other people's rights.

Public authorities may restrict this right if they can show that their action is lawful, necessary and proportionate for example if you express views that encourage racial or religious hatred.

Investigatory Powers (Interception by Businesses etc for Monitoring and Record-keeping Purposes) Regulations 2018

The Investigatory Powers Regulations 2018 allow employers to investigate or detect the unauthorised use of internal telecommunication system, including internet use. If these steps are necessary, you will be told that monitoring of the internet will occur.

Data Protection Act 2018

The [ICO Employment Practices Code](#) states that employers must be clear with their employees if they intend to monitor social media accounts. Covert monitoring will only be justified in very exceptional situations. We will not routinely monitor personal social media accounts unless such monitoring forms part of an investigation into allegations of breach of our policies or Code of Ethical Conduct.

General Data Protection Regulation

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires employers to be transparent about the personal data that they hold and how it is used.

Information obtained from monitoring an employee's internet use will normally amount to personal data. If the organisation considers it justifiable and reasonable to monitor a personal social media account, we will inform the employee of this fact, the legal basis for processing as well as what type of monitoring is carried out, including the nature, extent and reasons for any monitoring. An impact assessment will also be carried out where processing is likely to result in a high risk to an employee's rights and freedoms.

Disciplinary Policy and Code of Ethical Conduct

Organisation's expectations and standards of conduct as outlined within the Disciplinary Policy and Code of Ethical Conduct, form an integral part of the Social Media Policy and will be considered in investigation or any alleged breaches.

Service policy, digital and social media can help us to communicate and support our customers and how we engage with them on important issues. Through social media we reach many different customers and we strive to ensure that our messages and content is inclusive and relevant to everyone. Digital and social media allows us to have conversations and receive feedback on the services we provide, community events, safety campaigns, and any service news. We share content that is aligned to our values and the role we play in educating and keeping our customers safe.

Using social media comes with great responsibility as those who use it are in effect publishers in their own right, and therefore are subject to publishing law, including defamation and libel

Information

Definition of social media

1. For the purpose of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media, including websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking in a public forum. This policy applies to all social media platforms, including but not limited to; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, NextDoor, TikTok, Snap Chat, LinkedIn, Facebook Workplace, WhatsApp and other instant messenger technologies.

Identifying yourself as a Kent Fire and Rescue Service employee on social media

2. Nobody who works or volunteers for us is permitted to state on their personal social media accounts/platforms, their link to the service. Do not include any mention of Kent Fire and Rescue Service in your profile/account names, bios or imagery depicting Kent Fire and Rescue Service uniform, personal protective equipment, vehicles or anything else which identifies that you work or volunteer for the service. We have a duty of care to minimise the risk of employees and volunteers being exposed to work-related online trolling, and not disclosing your link with the service significantly reduces that risk. This does not however restrict you from engaging with, or sharing content from, the official corporate Kent Fire and Rescue Service accounts to your own platforms.

3. The only social media platforms where you can identify yourself as working for Kent Fire and Rescue Service, is LinkedIn and Facebook Workplace - professional networking sites which are representative of employment/volunteering and your career.
4. Nobody who works or volunteers for us is permitted to discuss incidents or other service business on any social media platform – other than within team instant messaging groups set up for the purpose of discussing work matters (see more about instant messaging, such as WhatsApp below).
5. Your contribution to professional discussions on platforms set up for this purpose, for example on the closed National Fire Chiefs' Council Workplace Facebook page, is important for sharing professional views and progressing professional debates. However, you must remember that at all times you are representing our views and values.

WhatsApp and other messenger technologies

6. If you are using a group instant messaging platform like WhatsApp or any other similar technology, for the purpose of communicating with your colleagues outside of working hours, or to discuss work related matters, these communications can be seen as work related and carried out in the course of employment. Therefore you must abide by the rules in this policy when communicating with colleagues using this channel.
7. If you use instant messaging platforms to communicate with your workplace colleagues, you are also expected to:
 - Be mindful of the time when you communicate any official work-related information and respect the fact that some users might be resting or be off duty. Do not issue instructions outside of ordinary working hours, unless in the case of emergency or if the group is specifically created for the purpose of out of hours communications.
 - Intervene if you disagree with any content that you feel does not meet the expectations outlined in this policy.
 - Not to exclude colleagues from unofficial instant messaging platform discussions such as on WhatsApp, which are created for groups or teams, for work related or social purposes, as this might be seen as discriminatory.
 - Report to your manager immediately if a message intended for a personal recipient is unintentionally shared on a work instant messaging group, to avoid the possibility of it being misinterpreted or cause any offence.
 - Remember that the messages you send can be used as evidence in tribunals or court.
 - Before sharing any content in an instant messaging group environment, consider:
 - Is it necessary?
 - Is it appropriate for the audience?
 - Is the time of day you are looking to send a message appropriate or fair?

Code of Ethical Conduct

8. It is very important to remember that all users of social media are bound by the Code of Ethical Conduct. The code sets out the core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality as well as the standards of behaviour we expect at work and can be found on the human resources section of the intranet. These should be observed when using social media.
9. You should not use personal social media sites during your working hours. Use of personal devices to access social media should be limited to allocated break times.
10. You can access the internet on work devices, for the purposes of shopping and personal research, but this can only be done during allocated break times and with your manager's permission.
11. The creation of work/team related social media profiles is not permitted. The corporate Kent Fire and Rescue Service social media accounts are the only profiles that should exist to officially represent the organisation.

12. If you use social media as part of your job (this should only be members of the engagement team), you must adhere to the following principles:
- Make sure that the communication benefits the organisation.
 - Use social media in both an ethical and lawful manner.
 - Obtain engagement team lead's permission before embarking on a public campaign using social media.
 - Sense check the content before you publish anything.

Using social media in a professional capacity

13. You are only permitted to disclose your link to Kent Fire and Rescue Service on LinkedIn and in professional networking groups. Any communications made in a professional capacity through these social media channels must not:
- Breach confidentiality, e.g. reveal confidential intellectual property or discuss our internal workings. This includes information that refers to an individual or information about an individual that would render them recognisable within the description.
 - Do anything that could be considered discriminatory or bullying/harassing in nature, e.g. offensive/derogatory remarks, posting offensive images or any posting considered likely to incite violence or offend others, breach the law or condone unlawful activity. This includes gossip, banter or use of inappropriate language or emojis in messages, pictures or videos, including communications with workplace colleagues via IM platforms, during or outside working hours.
 - Bring the organisation into disrepute, e.g. by criticising a stakeholder, partner or customer.
 - Breach copyright, e.g. using images without consent, making defamatory or libellous comments about individuals or other organisations or posting images or links to inappropriate content
 - Any other behaviour which has potential to damage the reputation of Kent Fire and Rescue Service.
 - Breach of data protection e.g. disclosing information about individuals without their consent or processing personal data in such way that would breach data protection principles.
 - Breach data protection of the organisation or anyone who is associated with us.

Using social media in a personal capacity

14. Social media is a public forum and the same considerations apply to its use as would apply to speaking in public or writing for a publication either in an official or private capacity. In social media the boundaries between professional and personal are often more blurred, so it's important to be particularly careful as boundaries which apply at work might be different to those which are appropriate on social media, where your audience is much wider and beyond your control and your posts are not only permanent but can also be shared/re-posted.
15. You should be aware of privacy limitations when posting material on social media and the extent to which that information is in the public domain. Once posted, the material, although only shared with limited followers or friends, can still be published and copied elsewhere. Thus, the posting could be shared more widely without the original poster's permission or knowledge. You are responsible for configuring your own privacy settings and reviewing them regularly.
16. When using social media in a personal capacity, you must be aware that your activity can damage the reputation of the organisation if you are recognised as being one of our employees or if your activity is considered relevant to your employment or in breach of Kent Fire and Rescue Service's Code of Ethical Conduct. This could also lead to your dismissal.
17. You are not permitted to state that you work for Kent Fire and Rescue Service on your social media profiles and must never discuss your work activities, e.g. discussing an operational incident or customer.

18. You should also consider your own personal security. This includes content which might compromise your safety, for example information about your hobbies or leisure activities.
19. You should not disclose official information on social media nor should you take part in commenting on any political or other public activity which could compromise or might be seen to compromise the government of the day or any future government.
20. You should make it clear that your views are your own, however the use of a disclaimer will not override the need for you to follow the principles outlined in this policy or offer you any protection in case your activity is considered as disciplinary misconduct. Serious breaches of these principles could be considered to be gross misconduct and would result in disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.
21. Any communications in a personal capacity through social media (please refer to the definition of social media) must not:
 - Breach confidentiality, e.g. revealing confidential intellectual property, personal information about individuals, or discuss our internal workings.
 - Do anything that could be considered discriminatory or bullying/harassing in nature, e.g. offensive/derogatory remarks, posting offensive images or any posting considered likely to incite violence or offend others, breach the law or condone unlawful activity.
 - Bring the organisation into disrepute, e.g. by criticising any stakeholders, partners or customers, making defamatory or libellous comments about individuals or other organisations or posting images or links to inappropriate content.
 - Any other behaviour which has potential to damage the reputation of KFRS.
 - Breach of data protection e.g. disclosing information about individuals without their consent or processing personal data in such way that would breach data protection principles.
 - Breach copyright, e.g. using images without consent.
22. You must not encourage behaviour in others through social media that could link to safeguarding issues, e.g. bullying, grooming or exploitation, theft of personal information, encouraging self-harm or violence, or glorifying activities such as excessive drinking or drug-taking. These kinds of post will be investigated and could be considered as gross misconduct which will result in disciplinary action against you and potential dismissal.
23. Complicity with inappropriate posts sent to you e.g. if you are tagged in inappropriate pictures or views which are in breach of expectations outlined within this document and failing to address these comments or re-posting, might be considered as misconduct or gross misconduct and could result in dismissal.
24. You may accept payment or other inducements for your own material on social media as long as it has been produced in your own time; does not relate to your employment with us; and that you have sought and received permission from us to engage in this type of other/outside employment.
25. We reserve the right to request the removal of content from personal accounts if the account or its submission is considered a risk to our reputation or to any of our staff.
26. We are mindful of your right to a private life and this includes your activity on social media, as long as there is no connection between your private life and your employment. For example, if we receive a complaint in relation to your social media activity, we will consider the actual impact of it on our reputation. If we establish a sufficient link between your activity and your employment and risk to our reputation, your conduct will trigger disciplinary investigation and is likely to amount to misconduct or gross misconduct, which could result in dismissal. We might also have a duty to other employees to conduct a disciplinary process, for example where bullying or harassment of one employee by another occurs through social media.

Use of social media in the staff recruitment process

27. The human resources team and managers should only conduct searches on social media when these are relevant to an applicant's skills, or claims that they have made on their application, e.g.

use of social media in a previous role, claim that they have created a site or blog that links to the skills required for the role.

28. There will be no systematic or routine checking of prospective employees' online social media activity prior to, or post, employment. However, once any individual signs their contract of employment they are bound by the principles outlined in this policy and within the Code of Ethical Conduct.

Misuse of social media

29. You should be aware that any use of social media websites through Kent Fire and Rescue Service devices (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under the Disciplinary Policy.
30. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against the individuals concerned and/or Kent Fire and Rescue Service. Staff should be aware that if misuse is considered to be criminal in nature, we will report this to the Police.
31. The uploading, posting, forwarding or posting of a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, may amount to gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal. (This list is not exhaustive):
- Pornographic material (e.g. writing, pictures, films or video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature)
 - A false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation.
 - Material which is offensive, obscene, criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to us, our customers or our staff.
 - Confidential information about Kent Fire and Rescue Service or our business or any of our staff or customers (without express authority to disseminate).
 - Any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for the employee or the organisation).
 - Material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.
 - Any other activity that can damage Kent Fire and Rescue Service's reputation or that destroy or is likely to destroy trust and confidence in you.
32. Where evidence of misuse is found a more detailed investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy. This will involve the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary, such information may be handed to the Police in connection with a criminal investigation.

Further Information

33. If you are in any doubt about what you should or should not post on social media, particularly about your work, or if you discover online content that may harm our reputation, you should contact the engagement team.

Appendix A - Top things to remember when using social and digital media.

- ✓ **Common sense:** social media helps us work openly and connect with the people we serve – making adverse or discriminatory comments in what you think is your personal time will have an impact on your work if you are identified as working for Kent Fire and Rescue Service.
- ✓ Adhere to the **Code of Ethical Conduct:** apply the same standards online as are required offline, whether acting in an official or personal capacity.
- ✓ **Doubts?** If in doubt, do not post it.
- ✓ **Accuracy:** check the accuracy and sensitivity of what you are posting before publishing.
- ✓ Always **check who someone is** before responding. For example, it may not always be obvious if we are being approached by a blogger or journalist, in which case we should refer them to our engagement team.
- ✓ **Permanent:** remember once something is posted online it is very difficult to remove it.
- ✓ Care should be taken to **avoid sharing personal details** of both members of the public and ourselves via social media and other digital channels. Identity theft and personal security are real issues – one of the reasons why you are not permitted to state your link to the service on social media.
- ✓ Check security and privacy settings on your profiles.
- ✓ **Never disclose commercially sensitive, private or confidential information.**
- ✓ Do not upload, post or forward any **content belonging to a third party** unless you have that third party's consent.
- ✓ **Don't escalate heated discussions**, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry or upset; return to it later when you can contribute in a polite, calm and rational manner.
- ✓ **Always consider others' privacy** and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion.
- ✓ **Avoid publishing your contact details** where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them, and never publish anyone else's contact details.
- ✓ Before your first contribution on any social media site, **observe the activity on the site** for a while before launching in yourself to get a feel for the style of contributions, the nature of the content and any 'unwritten' rules that other contributors might follow.
- ✓ If you notice **any content posted on social media about us** (whether complimentary or critical) please report it to your line manager or the Engagement team.

Further Information

- Policy on a page
- People Impact Assessment

Document Audit Information	
Senior Officer Accountable	Dominika Kimber
Authorised by	Karen Irvine
Direct enquiries to	Dominika Kimber
Date Implemented	July 2021
Review by	July 2023
Amendments required to	None
Related documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary Policy • Code of Ethical Conduct
Replaced documents	None
Security classification	None
Version No	3.0
Version change summary	3.0 General review and update of the policy triggered by the scheduled review date

By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021

Subject: ROAD SAFETY PRESENTATION

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR INFORMATION

SUMMARY

Presentation will be given at the meeting highlighting Kent Fire and Rescue Service's commitment towards Vision Zero for Kent

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By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 22 July 2021

Subject: INFORMATION UPDATE

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR INFORMATION

SUMMARY

This information update covers the following topics:

- A.** Pandemic Update (paragraphs 1 – 4 refer);
- B.** Inspection and National Issues Update (paragraphs 5-6 refers);
- C.** Performance Update (paragraphs 7 – 18 refer);
- D.** Operational Update (paragraphs 19 - 28 refer);
- E.** Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update (paragraphs 29 – 56 refer);
- F.** Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme update (paragraphs 57 - 63 refer);
- G.** Insurance Update (paragraph 64 refers and **Appendix 1** refer)
- H.** Pensions and Pensions Board Update (paragraph 65 and **Appendix 2** refer).

CONCLUSION

Members are requested to:

1. Consider and note the contents of the report.

COMMENTS

Background

A. Pandemic Update

Lead/Contact Officer: James Finch, Assistant Director, Corporate Services
01622 692121 ext 8453, james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org

1. At the time of writing, the removal of all national restrictions relating to the ongoing pandemic has been put back by the government to 19 July 2021, from the date stated in the original roadmap of 21 June. The NHS vaccination programme continues and has now reached people in their early 20s in England, and more than 40m people have received at least one dose. There is concern however about a third wave developing, based on the delta variant. We, and partners in the strategic coordinating group across Kent and Medway are monitoring the situation closely.
2. Infection case rates across Kent and Medway have been generally low in recent months, compared to other areas, with some recent spikes due to variants being identified in specific locations such as Canterbury and Maidstone. Generally however, we have continued to have low levels of infection amongst those that work for us.
3. We continue to produce and share Covid messages under the #kenttogether banner to encourage the safety of all our customers.
4. Plans are progressing to perform some light touch works at the Godlands site while it remains at a very low occupancy level, as well as other locations across the estate.

B. Inspection and National Issues Update

Lead/Contact Officer: James Finch, Assistant Director, Corporate Services
01622 692121 ext 8453, james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org

5. A new service liaison lead, Lee Walker, has been appointed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services. There has been no change to the anticipated timing for the next inspection for the Authority from summer 2022.
6. The government launched a new website for fire and rescue information in England: Fire England (fireengland.uk) on 21 June 2021. This was first raised in 2017 as an ambition of the government and their hope is that this website becomes the first place members of the public as well as those working in fire and rescue go for information and advice. It contains news stories, information on services, statistical information, national campaigns, recruitment information and fire safety advice. There will still be a fire presence on GOV.UK, but Fire England will link to that material as required.

C. Performance Update

Lead/Contact Officer: James Finch, Assistant Director, Corporate Services
01622 692121 ext 8453, james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org

Summary of Performance

7. This update provides Members with an overview of the Authority's performance between April and May 2021/22 as well as performance against the three-year average targets for the period 2021-24. Caution should be taken with any projections referenced in this update as we are only two months into the financial year and at the beginning of a new medium term reporting period.
8. So far this year 5,740 emergency calls were received in the Authority's control room which is higher than levels seen in the previous year. The Authority has attended 884 fires so far this year which is consistent with the same period the previous year. The three-year average projection for the 2021-24 period is 4,325 which is higher than the target of 4,210.
9. Accidental fires accounted for 59% of the total fires attended so far this financial year and, as a result of these fires, two people have died and 13 people have suffered fire related injuries. Three further people have died at these fires but the cause of death has been determined as non-fire related; they were as a result of a road traffic collision and subsequent fire, which has been detailed in the operational update section of the report. There has also been one serious injury and one slight injury reported as a result of deliberate fires this year.
10. In recent years the Authority has reported the lowest ever number of accidental fires in the home. So far this year 109 incidents have been attended which is slightly higher than the levels seen in the previous years. The current projection for the medium term period (2021-24) is 541 which is 1.7% higher than the target.
11. The Authority has attended 131 road traffic collisions so far this financial year which is considerably higher than the same period in the previous year (56). Last year however the months of April and May had only a third of the expected levels activity for those months due to the first lockdown. The number of incidents this year are comparable to previous years and in line with what would be expected. As a result of these incidents one person has died and 13 have been seriously injured.
12. So far this year 72.2% of life-threatening incidents were reached within 10 minutes and 83.1% within 12 minutes. Overall performance is higher than the targets set for these indicators.
13. The Authority attended life-threatening fire incidents within 10 minutes on 76.8% occasions whilst life-threatening road traffic collisions were reached within 10 minutes on 67.3% of occasions. Non-life threatening incidents were attended within 15 minutes on 92.5% of occasions.

14. The Authority's Customer Safety teams have delivered 1,733 Safe and Well Visits to customers across the County so far this year. In addition to these visits, 140 Home Safety Visits have been carried out by on duty crews.
15. All building consultations received (224) have been completed within 21 days on 100% of occasions so far this year. Business Safety teams have also carried out 334 audits of business premises so far this year in line with the Authority's risk based inspection programme.
16. The Authority aims to have an average of 50 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. So far this year the average number of fire engines available has been 34 during the day (9am-6pm) and 52 in the evening (6pm to 9am). Of the 34 available during the day, 26 of these are full-time fire engines and the remainder on-call.
17. So far this year, 3.70% of all contracted hours have been lost due to sickness. Operational staff have lost 4.81% of contracted hours to sickness and Corporate teams staff have lost 1.10%.
18. **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 four RIDDOR-reportable injuries have been recorded.

D. Operational Update

Lead/Contact Officer: Mark Rist, Director, Operations
 01622 692121 ext 8231, chris.colgan@kent.fire-uk.org

Recent Incidents of Interest

19. There have been a number of significant recent incidents which are brought to Members' attention.
20. **Flat Fire, Marine Place, Ramsgate** – initial call 03:03 hrs, 18/4/2021: Firefighters were called to reports of a flames issuing from the roof of a three storey property at the harbour's edge. On arrival, the occupants of a smoke logged first floor flat informed firefighters that they believed someone was still inside in the second floor flat. Despite firefighter's best efforts in difficult conditions, they were not able to reach the resident before the second floor became extensively affected by fire and smoke, and the resident was sadly declared a fatality. The cause of the fire was most likely faulty cabling to an electrical consumer unit.
21. **Road Traffic Collision, Lydd** – initial call 18:20 hrs, 18/4/2021: The Authority's control room received a call to a serious road traffic collision on the Romney Road in Lydd. The incident involved two vehicles, one which was on fire still containing

occupants and another vehicle where the casualty had been ejected from their vehicle on impact. This tragic incident resulted in three fatalities and another casualty being transported to hospital in a life-threatening condition. The investigation into the collision was led by Kent Police, and the cause has yet to be released. Full support has been provided to those colleagues that attended this traumatic incident.

22. **Freight Train Fire, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks – initial call 05:16 23/4/21:** Multiple calls were received in the early morning to smoke issuing from a freight train, stationary near Dunton Green railway station. A variety of resources from the Authority were mobilised, liaising with Network Rail to ensure a safe working environment was secured. Access to the scene was difficult, and crews worked hard in arduous conditions to bring the fire under control. The fire had occurred in the engine unit of a two car engineering train, and was extinguished using foam firefighting media. Disruption to the surrounding rail network was minimised through collaboration with Network Rail, and the scene was handed back to them approximately 3 hours after initial mobilisation of KFRS.
23. **Flat fire, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone – initial call 00:49 hrs, 28/4/2021:** Firefighters were called to a three storey building to reports of smoke and flames issuing. The officer in charge deployed two breathing apparatus wearers to a third floor flat where the fire was believed to be whilst other residents of the building were evacuated. The breathing apparatus team discovered a casualty in the flat, and sadly the casualty was declared a fatality at the scene. The fire was brought under control within an hour, and an investigation concluded the cause of the fire was smoking materials and bedding coming into contact.
24. **Gas Explosion, Willesborough, Ashford – initial call 07:57, 4/5/21:** Multiple calls were received to a domestic dwelling fire. The Authority's control room operators then also being made aware that there had been an explosion and that the incident was "persons reported". On arrival it was clear that a huge explosion had occurred, with one property suffering extensive damage and well alight, with further damage to several others and fire spreading to an adjoining house. Casualties were being treated by members of the ambulance service and Kent Police, with further casualties thought to be trapped in the rubble. A breathing apparatus team were briefed and deployed to search for and rescue any occupants, and they quickly located two people trapped under rubble and the remains of the property's roof. Firefighters remained on scene for the rest of the day, and the Technical Rescue team and the search dog searched the remains of the properties for any further casualties.
25. The severity of the damage and complexity of the debris meant identifying the cause took a total of four days, and was being determined as a leak of butane gas from a cylinder in a portable heater in the kitchen of one of the properties. In total there were nine casualties, two were airlifted to London hospitals, four were treated at local hospitals and three were treated at scene and released. The Authority worked closely with a number of other services and agencies to provide support to resolve the incident and support those affected.

26. **Light Aircraft Crash, Headcorn – initial call 16:26 hrs, 9/5/2021:** A call was received from the Police to a plane crash in farmland near Headcorn aerodrome. A badly damaged biplane was located in a field and the pilot was sadly confirmed deceased by South East Coast Ambulance Service shortly afterwards. The scene was made safe and handed over to the Police and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board after approximately two hours.
27. **Assistance to Police, Aylesham – initial call 08:53 hrs, 11/05/2021:** A team from the Authority's Technical Rescue capability were mobilised to woodland near Aylesham to assist a Police search team investigating a suspected murder case. The team spent the day working with Kent Police.
28. **Animal Rescue, Etchingam – initial call 16:25 6/6/2021:** East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service requested assistance to rescue a cow stuck in a stream. The animal rescue team and equipment were mobilised from Faversham, and the newly procured Telehandler was also deployed.

E. 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

29. 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 Update

30. **Legislative Update:** The Fire Safety Act 2021 gained royal ascent on 25 June 2021. This amends the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by confirming that the duty holder/building owner is responsible for the building structure and external walls as well as doors to flats which open into common areas. The team also continues to prepare for introduction of the Building Safety Bill where they will be working very closely and deliver some functions on the behalf of the Health and Safety Executive.
31. **Recent Appointments:** The Building Safety team has appointed a temporary fire engineering manager and four design technicians. These roles align to the national competency framework set by the National Fire Chiefs' Council. All the successful applicants are progressing towards, or are at qualified fire engineer status, which will build additional resilience within the fire engineering team. We have also recruited four inspectors. This year also marks 10 years of the Authority's Volunteers' Scheme and Building Safety was pleased to gain four volunteers recently to support Building Safety within the community. The role helps to provide reassurance, advice and raise awareness of the fire safety regulations.
32. **Building Risk Review:** Members will be aware of the work being undertaken nationally for all Fire and Rescue Services to audit tall buildings in their areas by 31

December 2021. The team has now visited over 170 buildings. The team are ahead of schedule and will complete all audits by the autumn.

Engagement Update

33. **Digital Experience Platform and Website:** Work continues to develop the Authority's new digital experience platform, which will include a new public website. The main aim of the digital experience platform will be to enhance communication and engagement between the Authority and customers across Kent and Medway. The preferred supplier has now been selected following a procurement process. The digital experience platform and new website is due to be launched in autumn 2021.
34. **Together Campaign:** A campaign has been launched to introduce and help establish the refreshed 'together' branding with our customers, colleagues and volunteers. The campaign features a range of social media content, which uses the brand identity to promote work from different teams across the whole workforce. The Authority is working to develop a campaign to enhance diversity and inclusion across our channels, which will complement the 'together' brand. The project aims to support colleagues and volunteers in demonstrating that they Authority is here for everyone, whoever they are.
35. **Review of Education and Byrnes Family Materials:** the Authority is reviewing the primary school education programme, which involves plans to develop 'the Byrnes family' materials to align to changes in the school curriculum. The animated family have been part of our safety education since 2015 and is currently used for schools education, and for events, such as fire station open days.

Campaigns

36. **Grass Fire Prevention:** A campaign to prevent accidental grass fires was launched in May 2021, following research which highlighted that a majority of grass fires attended by crews are started accidentally. The campaign is set to run until September 2021. A variety of channels and methods will be used to reach target audiences and influence behaviour change.

Events

37. The Authority is preparing a trial 'COVID Safe' activity on 23 July 2021 for the children of families that work for us. The event will be in line with government and industry regulations and recommendations as they apply at that time. A small number of people will be invited to book to attend to allow us to test protocols and processes. Plans are currently being developed to hold larger events, such as open days in late summer and a series of smaller autumn events at on-call fire stations, subject to COVID-19 guidance. Future events delivered at fire stations will be focused on quality engagement and be only accessible through a booking system – to help manage the numbers of customers who attend. The Authority will also be increasing

the accessibility of our events for customers who are not able to attend through the use of video streaming and 'Facebook LIVE' technology.

Customer Experience and Behaviour Change

38. **Fire risk Self-assessment Project:** The Customer Experience and Behaviour Change Lead is supporting the development of a national on-line fire risk self-assessment in conjunction with the Fire Kills team at the Home Office. This is currently being piloted with a number of other fire and rescue services with a national rollout planned for later in the summer. The tool will be aimed at lower risk households that do not need a safe and well visit. It forms another useful channel for people to receive bespoke home fire safety advice.
39. We are also working with the National Fire Chief's Council in partnership with NHS England, to develop a risk stratification based on health data. It is hoped this will allow the NHS to identify households at greater risk from fires in the home and pass these data to the Authority so that it can offer safe and well visits to vulnerable customers.
40. **Smoking Campaign:** the disposal of cigarettes combined with any inherent vulnerabilities a customer may have continues to be the most frequent cause of fatalities in accidental dwelling fires. Reducing the likelihood and impact of these fires is a priority. Research has been carried out into the behaviours and motivations surrounding smoking. Using this evidence, a multi-agency campaign has been developed which was launched in July 2021 and will run for twelve months. The campaign aims to encourage people to have 'smoke free homes' either by stopping smoking entirely or by committing to only smoke outdoors. By not smoking in the home, customers will not only remove the fire risk but also the health risks associated with second hand smoke.
41. A similar approach is being taken to research the causes and behaviours surrounding kitchen fires as these account for the largest proportion of all accidental dwelling fires. The findings will inform a future campaign with the aim of influencing behaviour and reducing the number of these types of fire.
42. Another area of research has explored grassland, woodland and crop fires, which continue to peak in the later spring and summer months. A literature review and incident data analyses were undertaken to investigate the behaviours and characteristics of people behind these types of fires. The research was used to design a public communications behaviour change campaign aimed at reducing the number of these fires, which was launched in May 2021. The campaign will be fully evaluated to measure its success and to support continuous improvement.
43. Members will recall that two surveys were recently completed by Kent and Medway residents, and conducted by the Institute of Customer Service. These revealed the Authority is providing an exceptional level of customer service across the board - including emergency response, safe and well home visits and building fire safety inspections. For overall customer satisfaction, the Authority achieved a score of 95.3

out of 100 in the survey of its customers, compared to the public service average of 75.3, and the all-sector average of 77.

44. The surveys confirmed that the Authority is highly performing in terms of customer service. As a result an application was submitted for ServiceMark, a highly sought-after accreditation by the Institute of Customer Service in recognition of excellent customer service. The interviews for this assessment took place during June 2021 and the outcome will be reported to the Authority at a future meeting. The Authority has also been shortlisted as a finalist in the UK Customer Satisfaction Awards in the Quality Service Provider category. The results will be announced in October 2021.

Collaboration Update

45. **The Pride in Care Chartermark:** We continue to work towards the Pride in Care Chartermark. The required the completion of an internal survey. The Authority is the first emergency service to undertake the Chartermark, with some real positives highlighted. Future stages involve a written submission and a 'mystery shopper' visit. We aim to achieve this charter mark by November 2021.
46. **Workforce Data:** Improving the disclosure rate of our workforce equality data is a priority for the Authority. We provide equality data to the Home Office annually by taking a "snapshot" of the organisation. Although there is still some work to be done, staff engagement has resulted a 10% improvement in disclosure rates. Improving this further will enable us to better understand the diversity of our workforce and future development of policies.
47. **Pride Season:** The Collaboration team are focusing on equality of access to our services and employment. The summer season provides us with another opportunity to focus on customers which we know, due to a range of factors, do not always have equality of access. Throughout June we flew rainbow flags as an indicator of acceptance and accessibility. We will also be engaging at a number of Pride events across Kent and Medway throughout the summer.
48. **Introduction of Inclusion Representatives:** The Collaboration team is piloting the concept of inclusion representatives to support our localised approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and to broaden the reach of inclusive practice across the organisation. A number of colleagues have volunteered and will receive training, enabling them to educate and support other colleagues as peers. The role includes seeking out opportunities to engage with the public who may be experiencing barriers, and supporting the organisation to be inclusive in a range of practices, such as policy development and decision making.
49. **Embracing Difference Together Conference:** The Collaboration team is currently developing the next lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning conference, scheduled for 2 February 2022, during LGBT+ history month.

50. **People Impact Assessment:** The Authority is currently ensuring all policies have a current people impact assessment. This work is scheduled to conclude at the end of September 2021 when all 73 corporate policies will have a corresponding people impact assessment. Any actions identified as a result of this process will be added to the organisational action tracker assuring a comprehensive and robust process to deliver required outcomes from the people impact assessment.
51. **Gypsy and Traveller Initiative:** All local authorities have been contacted by the Collaboration team and a number of joint visits have occurred to traveller sites. The visits involve firefighters and the Safe & Well team, supported by the Collaboration team. The teams offer safety information and advice, provide smoke alarms, check white goods and engage with customers. It enables local firefighters to better understand their customers and risk areas and also align with Gypsy and Traveller history month. The Authority, along with Kent County Council delivered a 'lunch and learn' session with the National Fire Chiefs' Council in June to communicate our current approach, better understand cultural barriers and share best practice.
52. **Keeping Customers Safe in their Homes:** Additional equipment for Home Safety Visits has been rolled out to all full-time fire engines. This enables an immediate response to seal any letterboxes as part of an Emergency Home Safety Visit, where Kent Police has identified a significant arson risk. All emergency visits are followed up by the safe and well team as a priority referral. This initiative is being delivered through a Memorandum of Understanding with Kent Police. This service has been used 14 times since its introduction earlier this year.

Customer Safety Update

53. **Safe and Well Visits:** Following the completion of a safe and well visit, questionnaires for customers have been introduced to gain customer feedback and insight. In the first quarter January – March 2021, 262 surveys were completed. The results were overwhelmingly positive. Highlights included:
- 100% of officers were polite and courteous
 - 96% of customers feel safer
 - Net promoter score = 94 (How likely it is that they would recommend the service to their friends and relatives)
54. Comments received included:
- 'Much safer now as my house didn't have any smoke alarms.'
 - 'Yes, definitely (feel safer). Have felt very vulnerable at night because I couldn't hear the smoke alarm if it went off at night.'
 - 'Excellent service maintained in the middle of a severe pandemic and icy weather conditions. I am so grateful.'
55. A quarterly summary is shared with the team to improve customer service. The focus is on recognising excellence in customer service when discussing individual and team

performance. Customer feedback and specific comments are shared as part of continuous dialogue as a valuable metric for managing performance alongside visit numbers.

56. **Safeguarding:** Requests for safeguarding advice and support has continued to increase, with more enquiries being received by Designated Safeguarding Officers. As we continue to see greater awareness from crews and cases are raised following visits we have identified the need for dedicated resource in addition to support safeguarding. We are currently recruiting for a Safeguarding Officer to support with all aspects of safeguarding across the service. This role will provide additional capacity by managing a caseload, making referrals and liaising with other agencies.

F. Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme Update

Lead/Contact Officer: James Finch, Assistant Director, Corporate Services
01622 692121 ext 8453, james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org

57. 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.
58. A total of 42 Freedom of Information requests have so far been received in 2021/22 (up to and including 08/06/2021). For comparison, at the end of Q1 in 2020/21 the Authority received 43 Freedom of Information requests (out of a total of 216 for that year). All Freedom of Information requests responded to so far in 2021/22 have been dealt with within the statutory limit of 20 working days (starting with the first working day after the request was received).
59. One Subject Access Request has so far been received in 2021/22 (up to and including 08/06/2021). All Subject Access Requests received in 2021/22 have been dealt with within the statutory limit (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).
60. **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.
61. 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).

62. 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

63. An update is brought to Members' attention as part of the Information Update Report that forms part of each agenda for the Authority. This means the data are normally reported five times a year, which exceeds requirements of the Code. **Table 1** presents the current update for 2021/22:

Table 1: Reporting against the revised Code of Practice 2021/22

	2021/22			
	Q1*	Q2	Q3	Q4
The number of requests received during the period	42			
The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed	6			
The number of the received requests that were processed in full	36			
The number of requests where the information was granted in full	28			

The number of requests where the information was refused in full	3			
The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part	5			
The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review	0			
Number of subject access requests**	1			

* Q1 is currently incomplete as it covers the period from 01/04/2021 to 30/06/2021

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

G. Insurance Update

*Lead/Contact Officer: Alison Kilpatrick Director, Finance and Corporate Services
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64. The annual update on insurance claim activity, across all types of insurance, for the 2020/21 financial year is attached at **Appendix 1**, for Members' information. Key points to note are that there were no new employer's liability claims during the year, one very small claim under public liability and only one property related claim. There were 107 motor claims (the lowest for a number of years) of which 19% occurred whilst on blue lights, but the total estimated cost likely to be borne by the Authority is some £56k.

H. Pensions and Pensions Board Update

*Lead/Contact Officer: Mark Rist, Director, Operations (Chair of the Pension Board)
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65. 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

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

CONCLUSION

67. Members are requested to:
- 67.1 Consider and note the contents of the report.

Insurance Claims Report for the 2020/21 Financial year

Background

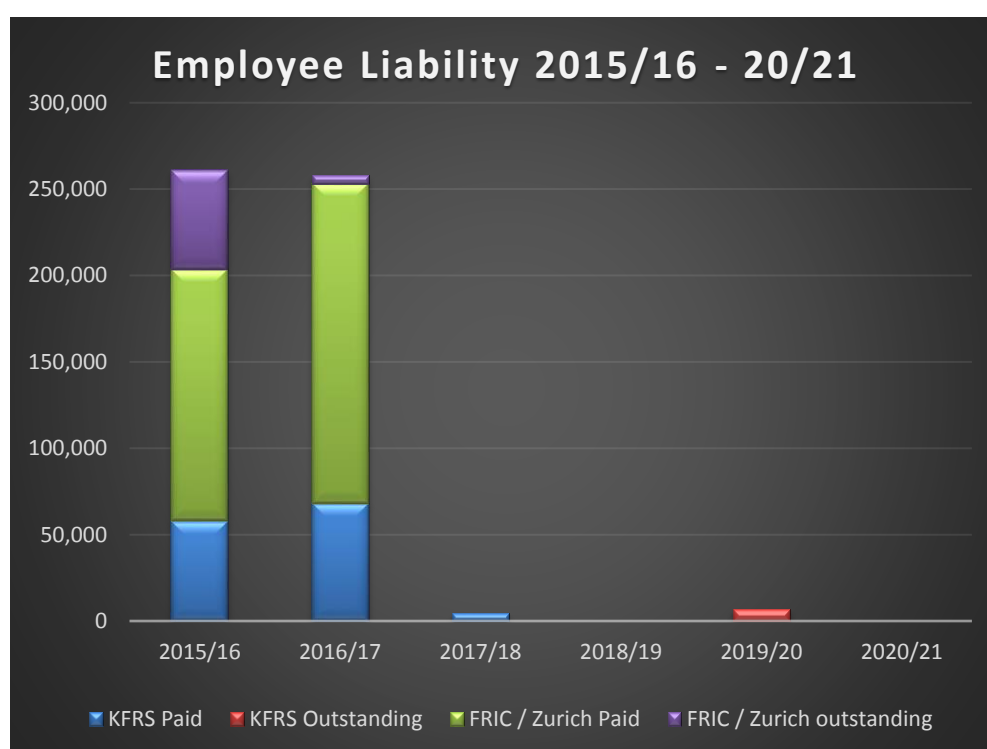
1. A report is brought to Members annually on insurance activity in the preceeding financial year. The nature of insurance claims involving personal injury means that they can take three to five years from claim to final settlement. Equally some motor claims can take several years to determine and therefore the final costs may not be known at the end of any given reporting period. Where costs are unknown insurers set a “reserve” as an estimate of final costs; these estimates are often on the generous side which may inflate the costs within this summary.
2. It should be noted that the number of employer’s liability and public liability claims is very small but individual claim costs can vary from hundreds to thousands of pounds and therefore significant annual variances can occur.

Employer’s Liability Claims

3. This policy covers claims made against the Authority by its employees for injuries sustained in the course of employment. The Authority’s excess for these claims is £25,000.
4. Employees have three years from the date of injury to submit a claim so there is the potential for further claims to be received for 2018/19 onwards. However, for claims due to contaminant exposure such as asbestosis, the claimant has three years from the date of diagnosis so claims could relate to exposure from 40 plus years before. It is uncertain at this point to establish whether the Covid virus will impact on such claims in the future.
5. It is now standard practice for the Authority to identify potential claims and report these to the Claims Portal as a notification (no reserve has been applied at this stage.). This enables the Authority and the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company to take positive action to collate the required evidence in advance of a potential claim being made thus reducing the risk of additional costs being incurred later and also allows us to review current practices. This is particularly important for potential future claims relating to contaminant exposure and now Covid 19 illness (which is reportable under the RIDDOR process if the source of the infection can be reasonably identified to have been work related). The Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company has already informed us that the insurance market is becoming highly sensitive to Covid 19 claims and as such we may well see limited cover being available in the future or a large increase in premiums. This potential risk has already been included within the corporate risk register.

6. There were no new liability claims made during 2020/21, although 16 notifications were listed but as yet have not matured to valid claims. There are currently three open claims, one of which relates to a claim period prior to 2014. The current total outstanding liability of these claims is £69k of which the reserve for the Authority is £7k (the remaining being absorbed by the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company and our previous insurer Zurich). The Authority maintains a good track record of successfully defending claims and reducing the costs. Within the period April 2020 to March 2021 the Authority has been able to successfully defend four claims, two of which had a nil settlement outcome and the remaining two at a value substantially lower than the amount filed by the claimant.

The Table below reflects the costs of Employer's liability claims from 2015/16 to 2020/21



Public Liability Claims

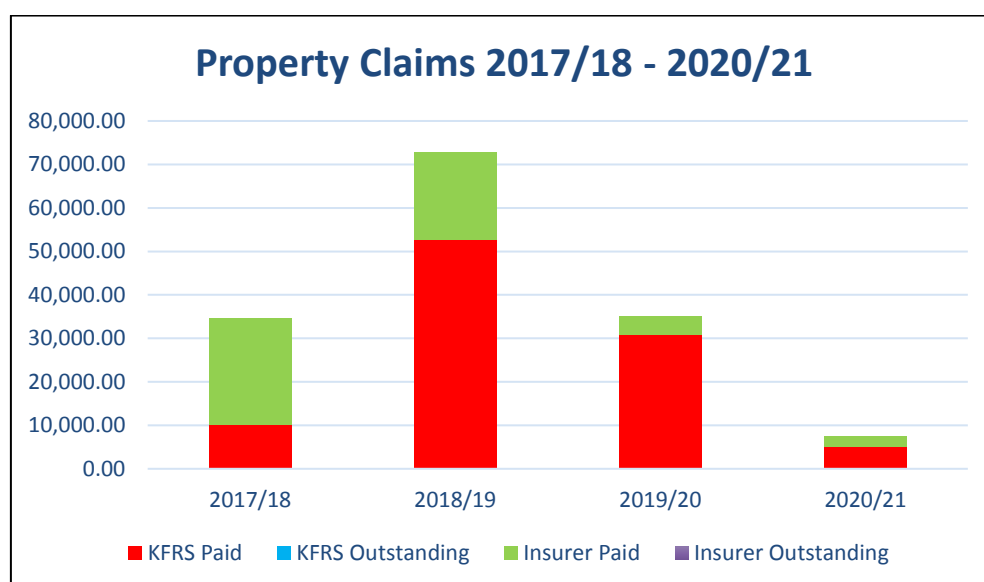
7. This policy covers claims against the Authority by the public for injury, loss or damage caused as a result of its activities (excluding motor accidents). This policy also carries an excess of £25,000 per claim. If the third party has suffered an injury the claimant has three years to open a claim from the date they become aware of the injury.
8. Public liability claims are generally low in frequency and value but the widely publicised "claims culture" means that the potential remains high and the premium therefore reflects this.

9. Only one claim was made against our Public Liability in the 2020/21 period, which resulted in a very low charge against the Authority. In the previous three years the Authority has incurred between three and six claims per annum, which has resulted in an average payment of £2,830 over that timeframe.

Property Claims

10. This policy covers damage to the Authority's own buildings and contents, excluding motor vehicles and carries an excess of £5,000. Unfortunately there was a spate of burglaries in 2018/19 and 2019/20 which resulted in increased property related claims, but thankfully this has subsided so consequently we only received one claim for 2020/21. The cost of this claim was above the excess value resulting in a cost to the Authority of £5k, with the remaining £2.5k being absorbed by the Insurance Mutual.

The table below shows the costs of claims from 2017/18 to 2020/21



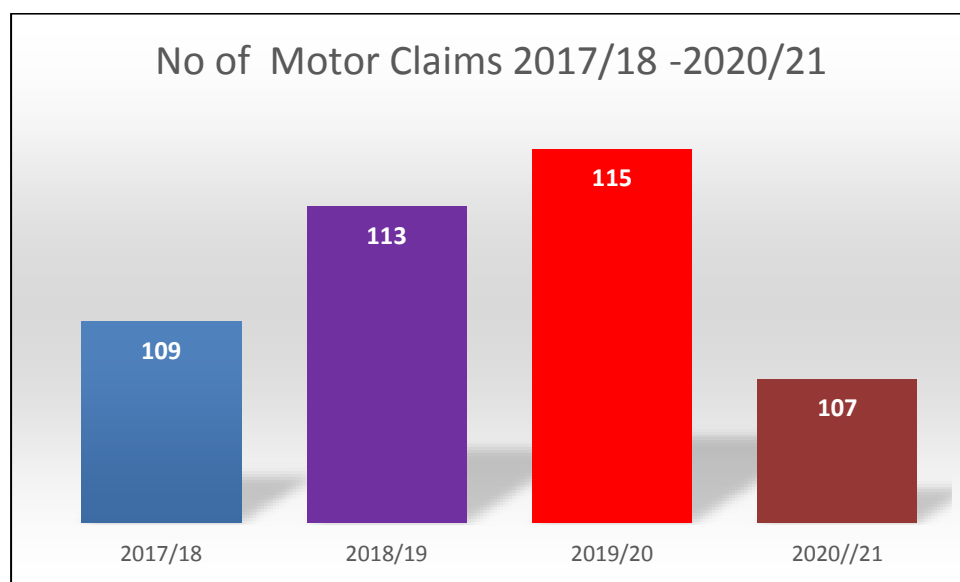
Motor Claims

11. This policy covers claims arising from vehicles (including emergency vehicles) used on the Authority's business. The Motor policy carries an excess of £50,000 for each claim for damage to the Authority's own vehicles, but all third party costs are borne by the third party insurer.
12. Continued improvements in reporting times after an incident has assisted in minimising claim costs, because by acting quickly this prevents inflated repair costs, vehicle hire costs and legal fees where a third party is involved. The implementation of CCTV footage continues to prove valuable in mitigating insurance claims,

particularly where a third party has been involved, as well as identifying cases where liability has occurred to enable a speedier settlement.

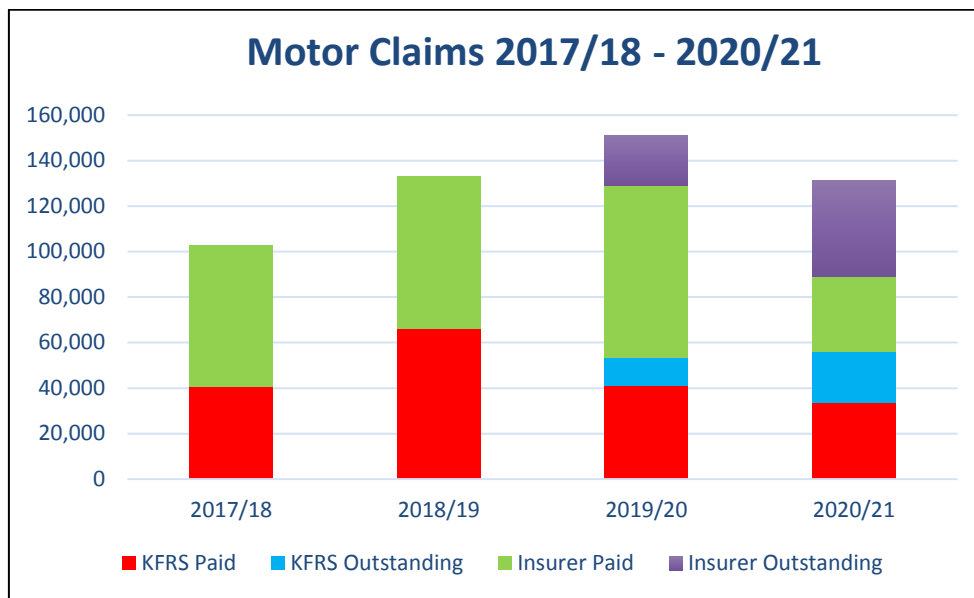
13. It is encouraged that all vehicle damage, no matter how minor is reported to allow a true reflection of vehicle damage and potential insurance claims. A review of damage is carried out on a vehicle by vehicle basis and consideration as to whether any repairs are essential or can be completed during the annual service process has assisted in reducing costs. Furthermore our appointed smart repair supplier may be used to remedy small paint and bodywork issues in order to reduce repair costs further.
14. There were 107 motor claims reported to our insurer between April 2020 and March 2021 (the lowest since 2016/17). There were on average six claims reported per month for the first quarter of 2020/21. However, as we reached the summer and an ease in Covid lockdown restrictions there was a noticeable increase in claims to between 12 and 15 per month. This continued until early winter where further Covid restrictions align again with a reduction in claims, similar to those of the first quarter.

The table below shows the number of motor claims reported from 2017/18 to 2020/21.



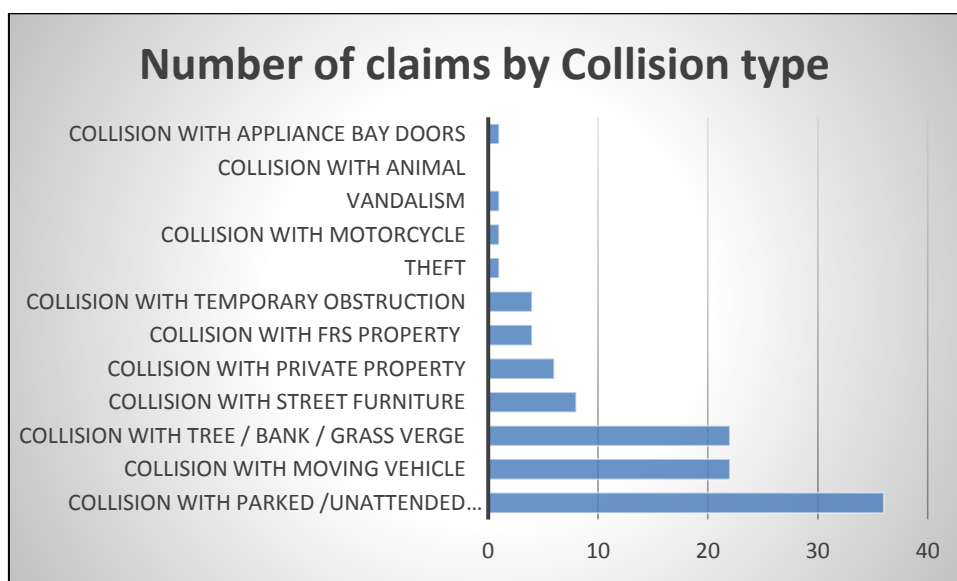
15. For 2020/21 there is an estimated total reserve of £132k for motor claims which includes an estimated cost to the Authority of £56k. A number of these claims are still to be finalised (mainly the last quarter) so a standard estimated reserve of £999 per claim has been applied and therefore this value is likely to change.

The table below shows the Motor Claims costs incurred from 2017/18 to 2020/21.



16. Collisions with a stationary object continue to be the most common cause of collision amounting to 76% of all claims this year. 34% of collisions involve a parked/unattended vehicle whilst appliances are manoeuvring through residential streets. These vehicles are often parked on both sides of a street, on corners and double yellow lines which often prevent an emergency vehicle to pass easily. The Authority also experienced damage to two vehicles when a large tree fell from a neighbouring property during a storm.

The table below shows the collisions by type



17. 69% of collisions in 2020/21 involved fire engines of which only a quarter were whilst travelling on blue lights, indicating that the majority of collisions did not occur on route to an incident. The Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company has recently started a review to explore the causes of such accidents, in order to try and identify possible options to reduce the frequency of such incidents, and as such this Authority has agreed to be part of that review.

The table below shows the collisions by vehicle type for 2020/21

Fire Appliances		Cars and Vans		Other	Total Number of collisions
On blue lights	Off blue lights	On blue lights	Off blue lights	On/ off blue light	
19	55	1	32	0	107
18%	51%	1%	30%	0%	100%

Claims Reporting Performance

18. The external claims reporting target set by FRIC (i.e. data reported on Claims Cloud) is 100% of all claims to be submitted within five working days and 90% within three working days. However for internal reporting (submission of the relevant paperwork to the Finance Team) the target is 100% for four working days and 90% for two working days. Based on the latest information provided by the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company, we have achieved 99% of all claims within four working days and 95% for within two working days. The previously reported KPI's were 94% and 86% respectively.

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MINUTES OF PENSION BOARD MEETING
18 May 2021

Present:

Lee Rose	KFRS (Employer Representative)
Mark Rist (MR)	KFRS (Employer Representative) (elected Chair)
James Finch (JF)	KFRS (Employer Representative)
Danny Barrett (DB)	FBU (Employee Representative)
Lawrence Pater (LP)	FOA (Employee Representative)
Dylan McEvoy	FRSA Representative (Employee Representative)

Also In Attendance:

Karen Irvine (KI)	Assistant Director, HR and Learning
Marie Curry (MC)	Business Support Manager/ Clerk
Neil Lewins (NL)	LPP

Apologies:

NEXT MEETING	Date: 21 September 2021
	Venue: TBC
	Time: 10am

1. Election of Chair of the Board

LR reported that this will be his last Pension Board meeting as he will be retiring from the Service at the end of July. He also added that due to the ongoing discussions surrounding the current pension situation, he would like to declare an interest and therefore due to this conflict has decided to step down as Chair of the Board. With this LR proposed that Mark Rist takes over as Chair of the Board, James Finch seconded that decision.

It was unanimously agreed that with effect from this meeting, Mark Rist becomes Chair of the Pension Board.

2. Welcome and Introductions

The Board welcomed Neil Lewins from LPP to the meeting and gave formal introductions.

3. Declarations of Interest on Items on the Agenda

LR declared an interest in the McCloud vs Sargent Case and therefore did not take part in any further discussions.

4. Minutes of the Pension Board held on 2 February 2021 and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Board on 1 March 2021

The minutes of the last Pension Board meeting held on 2 February and the extraordinary meeting held on 1 March were noted.

5. Pension Board Action Log - Update on Progress

KI provided an update on the open actions. The log can be viewed on the Pension Board SharePoint site. Noted

6. LPP Risk and Compliance Report

KI presented the Risk and Compliance Report which is a report produced by LPP. The report covers compliance, complaints, trends and breaches in relation to the service LPP is providing to the Authority. KI said that she wanted to bring to the attention of the Board that within the report it mentions one data breach which occurred back in April when an incorrect email address was used by LPP when providing some information to a scheme member. She said that she has been provided reassurances that the error has now been corrected. JF asked for that breach to be recorded on our own data log. **(Action: KI/JF)**

7. LPP Performance Report

KI introduced the performance report which is the first report to this Board from LPP that details information on performance against the SLA, fund memberships, customer satisfaction, service improvements, My Pension Online as well as other pension related data. KI said that LPP did raise an issue with her about call waiting times on their Helpdesk which was around 10 minutes. This was linked to staff sickness because of Covid and although no formal complaints have been raised, she said that she has been assured that waiting times are now down to an average of 3 minutes. KI said that she has fortnightly meetings with our Contract Manager at

LPP and for the next meeting of this Board will ask for representation from LPP to attend in order that they can go through the Risk and Compliance Report and the Performance report in more detail as well as talk through the transition to the new Pension Online system. **(Action: KI)**

8. Update on Cases (Standing Item)

McCloud vs Sargent Case

NL said that there is still a delay whilst we are waiting for revised guidance documents to be released from central Government on Immediate Detriment. It is anticipated that these will be issued within the next couple of weeks. NL said that the LGA are in the process of putting together a framework for FRAs to use to try and establish a consistent approach across the board and this will be released alongside the Government guidance. KI asked NL if there was any indication that the guidance will clarify the unanswered questions that FRAs have for example questions on tax and annual allowance benefits and contributions. NL responded by saying that it is hoped that these areas will be covered and clarified within the guidance, if they are not, then that will create big issues all round. He added that although the guidance is likely to be more detailed, there will be some areas that realistically will not be covered within it as more time is needed due to the complexities.

NL said that the LGA's Communications Working Group is creating a website, currently it is a skeleton site, setting out basic information on the schemes and remedies and as and when further clarity is received then the site will be updated and eventually become the single point of contact for latest updates and information. KI asked if she will be notified when the site will be released so that she can update our scheme members. NL said that the site will be released soon and will be advertised widely. NL also said that the LGA will be doing a survey every six months while going through the remedy process to see what is working and what is not. He said that the LGA are also happy to hold individual support sessions for FRAs to help them understand what is required from the survey.

LP asked whether there was any indication of timeframe of when we are likely to see any outcomes so that he can at least provide some sort of update to his FOA scheme members. NL said that in his view, it is unlikely to be until at least autumn 2022. He added that any changes to the Public Sector Pensions Act following the outcomes of this case and before any changes can be made to each of the Schemes, there will need to be a period by where all the public sector organisations that are affected by the changes are consulted, it will not be a quick process.

DB said that the biggest question he gets from his members is why some FRAs have taken the decision to make payments with regards to the Immediate Detriment and this Authority hasn't. NL responded by saying that those FRAs are choosing to make payments under the original note released by the Home Office and by doing so are undertaking a big risk as they are taking on the responsibility of making those payments ahead of the remedy outcomes and can only

work within current tax legislation . There is the potential that this could lead to huge tax implications for individuals if the calculations are outside any revised legislation as well as a big administrative exercise for those FRAs to rectify. There is still so much detail that needs unpicking around annual allowances and tax implications and that is why some FRAs are reluctant to do anything just yet. He added that LPP, nor your Scheme Manager would want to put its scheme members in that position. DB responded by asking that if payments were made, could a waiver be signed by members as a disclaimer as to what the potential risk is to them and then at least they can make an informed decision. KI said that the risks at the moment are still so unclear so providing a disclaimer will be of no benefit as there will be no detail to provide to members in order for them to make a decision. As Scheme Manager we should be giving scheme members as much information as possible to make an informed decision and we just don't have that detail. DB said that he accepts what is being said but with the delay and uncertainty this is causing, a lot of people are now reporting wellbeing issues. KI said that she does understand this but with the release of the imminent documents, this should help us assess what the risks could be and then able to provide scheme members with details in order that they can then make a decision. NL added that it is in everyone's interest to get this right rather than have to revisit much later down the line.

O'Brien Case

KI said that there is no further update at this time.

IDRP Cases

KI gave an update on the current IDRP cases which were noted.

9. Abatement

KI gave an update on the recent audit on abatements and the issues identified from this. She added that following discussion with LPP and LGA, it has now been confirmed that CPD payments should not be included in pensionable pay, this is seen as an ABS and therefore will now be removed from the calculation. KI said that there will be some communications out to staff soon around this, and also emphasising that it is their own responsibility to check they do not go over the threshold. KI said that she will do a note for the Board on the detail surrounding abatement. **(Action: KI)**

10. Pension Manager Appointment

KI confirmed that the post for the Pension Manager has now been filled and it is hopeful that they will commence employment at the beginning of July.