



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

**Meeting of the Authority**

**Thursday, 14 October 2021**

**10.30am**



## AGENDA

### KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Thursday, 14 October 2021, 10.30 am  
Cornwallis Suite, Courtenay Road,  
Maidstone, ME15 6LF

Ask for: Marie Curry  
Telephone: **(01622) 692121**

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

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

#### **A Routine Business**

- A1. Chairman's Announcements *(if any)*
- A2. Membership Changes and Apologies for Absence
- A3. Declarations of Interest in Items on this Agenda
- A4. Minutes of the Meeting of the Authority held on 22 July 2021 *(for approval)*

#### **B For Decision**

- B1. Finance Update for 2021/22
- B2. External Audit Report for 2020/21
- B3. Development of the 2022/23 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan *(Presentation)*
- B4. Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2022
- B5. Annual Report on Standards and Allowances 2020/21
- B6. Calendar of Meetings 2022/23

#### **C For Information**

- C1. Understanding Kent Fire and Rescue Service *(Presentation)*
- C2. Information Update *(Consolidated Report)*

#### **D Urgent Business** *(Other items which the Chairman decides are urgent)*

#### **E Exempt Items** *(At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public).*

Marie Curry  
Clerk to the Authority  
5 October 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.*

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## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

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MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held on Thursday, 22 July 2021 at Rochester Fire Station.

PRESENT:- Mr P Barrington-King, Mr A Booth, Mr N Chard, Mr P Cole, Ms K Constantine, Mr D Crow-Brown, Ms M Dawkins, Mr M Dendor, Mr P Harman, Ms S Hohler, Ms S Hudson, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr R Love OBE, Mr J McInroy, Ms L Parfitt-Reid, Mr A Ridgers, Mr R Thorne and Mr S Tranter.

APOLOGIES:- Mr D Beaney, Mr N Collor, Mr D Daley, Mr B Kemp, Mr S Manion, Mr V Maple (self-isolating), Mr C Simkins, Mr M R Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss A Millington QFSM; the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Ms A Kilpatrick; the Director, Operations, Mr M Rist; Director Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety, Mr J Quinn; Assistant Director, HR and Learning, Mrs K Irvine; Assistant Director, Corporate Services, Mr J Finch; Assistant Director, Operations, Mr M Deadman; Assistant Director, Resilience, Mr C Else; Assistant Director, Customer and Building Safety, Mr M Woodward; Finance Manager, Mrs N Walker and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

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

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### 1. Election of Chair for 2021/22

*(Item A1)*

- (1) Mr Tranter moved, Mr Booth seconded, that Mr Chard be elected Chair of the Authority.
- (2) There being no other nominations, Mr N Chard was declared elected as Chair of the Authority for 2021/22.

#### 2. Election of Vice-Chair for 2021/22

*(Item A2)*

- (1) Mr Chard moved, Mr Love seconded, that Mr Tranter be elected Vice-Chair of the Authority.
- (2) There being no other nominations, Mr S Tranter was declared elected as Vice-Chair of the Authority for 2021/22.

#### 3. Chair's Announcements

*(Item A3)*

- (1) Members stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect to former Member, Cllr Steve Iles whose death was announced earlier this month.
- (2) The Chair recorded the thanks of Members to the Station Leader and Crew at Rochester Fire Station for hosting this meeting and making Members feel welcomed.
- (3) The Chair welcomed the new Members as well as welcomed the existing Members back to the Authority.
- (4) The Chair welcomed Paul Cuttle, Grant Thornton; Frankie Smith, KCC Internal Audit and Jan Guyler, Interim Monitoring Officer to the meeting.
- (5) The Chair recorded Members thanks to Colin King, Assistant Director, Customer and Building Safety and Lee Rose, Assistant Director, Resilience on their recent retirements.
- (6) The Chair congratulated Chris Else, Assistant Director, Resilience; Matt Deadman, Assistant Director, Operations; Mark Woodward, Assistant Director Customer and Building Safety on their recent promotions.

- (7) The Chair welcomed Mark Rist to his first meeting as Director, Operations since his appointment.
- (8) The Chair, on behalf of Members, congratulated Richard Stanford-Beale and all staff involved for their hard work in contributing to the Service being awarded the ServiceMark Accreditation from the Institute of Customer Service.

**4. Membership**

*(Item A4)*

- (1) The list of Members appointed by the constituent Councils to serve on the Authority for 2021/22 was noted.

**5. Minutes – 27 April 2021**

*(Item A6)*

- (1) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 27 April 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**6. Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee – 27 April 2021**

*(Item A7)*

- (1) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the Minutes of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee meeting held on 27 April 2021 be noted.

**7. Hearings Panel – 21 June 2021**

*(Item A8)*

- (1) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the Minutes of the Hearings Panel held on 21 June 2021 be noted.

**9. Appointment to Committees and Outside Bodies for 2021/222**

*(Item B1 - Report by Clerk to the Authority)*

- (1) The Authority reviewed its scheme of proportionality as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and then considered various matters relating to the appointment of Members to Committees and outside bodies for 2021/22.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) for the purposes of the statutory annual review of proportionality, and without any Member voting against, the allocation of places to the political groups on the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee as detailed in paragraphs 4 and 5 and shown in Table 1 of the report, be approved for 2021/22;
  - (b) as in previous years, Hearings Panels, if and when needed in 2021/22, comprise four Members (one drawn from each of the four parties and where required on the nomination of the Group's Leader);
  - (c) the Authority continues in the membership of the outside bodies to which it currently belongs, and the allocation of places and voting rights on the LGA General Assembly between the political groups, as shown in Table 2 to the report, be approved for 2021/22.

## **10. Appointment of Independent Person**

*(Item B2 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered a report which made recommendations to the appointment of Jennifer Waterman as the Independent Person following a successful interview process.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the appointment of Jennifer Waterman as the Authority's Independent Person be approved.

## **11. Customer Safety Plan**

*(Item B3 - Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered the Customer Safety Plan 2021-25 as well as the six new strategies that underpin it; the key strategic indicators which form an indicative balanced scorecard against performance as well as the decision in principle to the Authority's command and control function remaining co-located with Kent Police.
- (2) In response to various queries raised by new Members of the Authority in relation to how targets are set in relation to accidental and deliberate fires, the Assistant Director, Corporate Services explained the process behind the calculation of figures.
- (3) In response to a query raised by Mr Thorne about the possibility of a combined Fire and Ambulance Station, the Director, Operations responded by saying that there is already a good collaborative relationship between Fire, Police and SECamb where these services have access to our sites to operate from.
- (4) In response to a query raised by Mr Love around the ways of monitoring performance and the use of case studies to ensure lessons have been learnt, the Chief Executive responded by saying that she will provide a report to the next meeting of the Authority on the work of the Operational Assurance Team whose role it is to gather and monitor operational performance information.
- (5) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the Customer Safety Plan for 2021-25 (Appendix 1 to the report) be approved;
  - (b) the draft Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy 2021-25 (Appendix 2 to the report) be approved;
  - (c) the draft Response and Resilience Strategy 2021-25 (Appendix 3 to the report) be approved;
  - (d) the draft People Strategy 2021-25 (Appendix 4 to the report) be approved;
  - (e) the draft Commercial Procurement Strategy 2021-25 (Appendix 5 to the report) be approved;
  - (f) the draft Environmental Improvement and Assets Strategy 2021-25 (Appendix 6 to the report) be approved;
  - (g) the draft Business Change, Information and Technology Strategy (Appendix 7 to the report) be approved;
  - (h) the strategic targets set for 2021-25 be approved;
  - (i) the Authority's command and control function in principle will remain co-located with Kent Police be approved;
  - (j) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

## **12. Final Financial Outturn 2020/21**

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

- (1) The Authority considered a report relating to the final outturn on revenue and capital spend for 2020/21 as well as details of the resultant transfer to Earmarked Reserves.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the final balance of the underspend, now being transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve is £1.837m be approved;
  - (b) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

**13. Internal Audit Annual Report 2020/21**

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

- (1) The Authority considered the Internal Audit Annual Report prepared by the Authority's Internal Auditor (whose services are provided by Kent County Council under a service level agreement (SLA)).
- (2) Ms Frankie Smith, Audit Manager, introduced the Annual Report which contained the Head of Internal Audit's opinion of the overall effectiveness of the Authority's framework of governance, risk management and control systems; the outcomes of the annual review of internal audit effectiveness required by regulation; the self-assessment of Internal Audit's compliance against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS); and an appraisal of Internal Audit's and the Authority's performance against the Key Performance Indicators set as part of the SLA.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2020/21, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
  - (b) the outcomes of the External Quality Assessment (EQA) of Internal Audit Services be noted.

**14. Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21**

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

- (1) The Authority considered a report on Treasury Management activity during 2020/21.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the year-end report on Treasury Management activity during 2020/21 be approved.

**15. Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**

*(Item B7 - Report by Assistant Director, Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Authority considered the Authority's Annual Governance Statement (incorporating the Operational Assurance Statement) for 2020/21, the preparation of which had followed completion of the annual internal self-assessment process.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the Authority's Annual Governance Statement (incorporating the Operational Assurance Statement) for 2020/21, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

**16. External Auditors' Audit Findings Report for 2020/21**

*(Item B8 - Report by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Authority considered the External Auditors' draft 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). Mr Paul Cuttle from Grant Thornton, introduced the draft Audit Findings report and advised Members that:-



- (a) at the time of drafting the report, there was still an area in relation to Pensions that were yet to be concluded, details of which are contained within Appendix 1 of the report;
  - (b) the completion of work to review the assumptions used by the Authority's external valuer in relation to the valuation of assets were yet to be concluded, details of which are contained within Appendix 1 of the report;
  - (c) the External Auditors' expect to issue an unqualified opinion in respect of the Authority's Financial Statements for 2020/21;
  - (d) the External Auditors' are yet to complete all of the Value For Money (VFM) work so are not in a position to issue the Auditors' Annual Report. This is expected to be issued by 30 September 2021. This is in line with the deadline specified in guidance issued by the National Audit Office, details of which are contained within Appendix 1 to the report.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
- (a) the External Auditors' draft Audit Findings report for 2020/21 attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be received.
  - (b) the contents of the letter from the Public Sector Audit Appointments be noted.

## **17. Annual Statement of Accounts 2020/21**

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

- (1) The Authority considered the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 and the proposed Letter of Representation (a formal statement by the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, which is required to be sent to the External Auditors in order to provide assurances as to the robustness of the Authority's approach to the preparation and audit of its Statement of Accounts);
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the Letter of Representation, as attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
  - (b) the Annual Statement of Accounts 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, and the Summary Financial Statement, as attached as Appendix 3, be approved;
  - (c) the remaining contents of the report, be noted.
  - (c) the Authority placed on record its thanks and congratulations to the Director, Finance and Corporate Services and her team involved for all their efforts in preparing such a clear and accurate set of final accounts for 2020/21.

## **18. Financial Update 2021/22**

*(Item B10 - Report by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) the Authority considered the first report for the 2021/22 financial year which provided an overview of the spend against the revenue and capital budgets forecast for the year, an update on a number of grants that have been received; a treasury update and a number of other financial related issues.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) Sufficient funding is drawn down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to meet the cost of the 2021/22 pay award be approved.
  - (b) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

## **19. Governance and Policy Update**

*(Item B11 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) the Authority considered a report which covered an update regarding the McCloud vs Sargeant pension case and the payment of Immediate Detriment cases; the refreshed Social Media Policy and the development of the Transparency in Supply Chains Statement, which is part of the roll out nationally of the Modern Slavery Act.
- (2) Members also considered an Addendum to the report which requested the agreement to a discretion in relation to Voluntary Scheme Pays.
- (3) In relation to a query raised by Mr Love around whether the Social Media Policy applies to Authority Members, the Chief Executive explained that Members should use the Policy as guidance and whilst acknowledging the fact that Members are not employed by the Service, it will help in safeguarding against reputational damage and the less positive aspects of social media.
- (4) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the Authority implements Immediate Detriment under McCloud vs Sargeant where sufficient information is available to do so be approved;
  - (b) the refreshed Social Media Policy (Appendix 1 to the report) be approved;
  - (c) the Transparency in Supply Chains Statement be processed as urgent business as and when available by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Authority be approved;
  - (d) with immediate effect, the introduction of a Voluntary Scheme Pays arrangements, with no minimum threshold, as detailed in the Addendum to the report, be approved.

## **20. Road Safety Presentation**

*(Item C1 – Presentation by Assistant Director, Customer and Building Safety)*

- (1) The Authority was given a presentation highlighting the Authority's commitment towards a Vision Zero for Kent in relation to Road Safety.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
  - (a) the Road Safety presentation be noted.

## **21. 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
  - E. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety
  - F. Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme
  - G. Insurance
  - H. Pensions and Pension Board
- (2) In response to a question raised by Ms Constantine under Item D in relation to faulty electrical equipment and related fires, Director Prevention, Protection, Customer

Engagement and Safety offered to send details of the Service's Safe and Well visits and Home Fire Safety visits to all Members so that these can be promoted within their community areas.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

(a) The contents of the report be noted.

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

**22. Abatement**

*(Item E2 – Exempt Report by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)*

(1) The Authority considered a report on an abatement issue.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the recommendations contained within the report, be approved.

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By: Director Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 14 October 2021

Subject: FINANCIAL UPDATE FOR 2021/22

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

This report is the first full detailed budget monitoring report for the 2021/22 financial year. It provides an update on a range of issues including those in relation to Cashflow management. When the 2021/22 budget was set in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, Members may recall that it was agreed that no funding would be set aside to fund any pay awards in 2021/22, as this reflected the Government's announcement that public sector pay awards would be paused for 2021/22. However, it was agreed that if such an eventuality did arise then there would be a need to draw down additional funding from the Resource reserve to fund the cost of any award. This has in fact proved to be the case for both operational colleagues and senior managers, and therefore some £503k has been drawn down from reserves to fund this additional commitment. No confirmation has yet been agreed with regards to any award for corporate staff. However, this draw down from reserves is one-off and will as such now cause an additional pressure on the budget for 2022/23, approximately £900k, if the award for corporate colleagues is agreed at 1.5%.

However, the revenue budget is currently forecast to underspend by £1.2m, but this would have been significantly less if funding had not been drawn down from reserves to fund the unexpected pay award. It is still early days in terms of forecasting the revenue outturn, hence it could reduce significantly if any of the potential risks, detailed in this report, materialise in the latter part of the year.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Agree to note the indicative project cost for the redevelopment of the Live Fire training facilities at Ashford Fire Station (paragraph 10 to 12 refers).
2. Consider and note the content of the report.

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

## COMMENTS

### Revenue and Capital Budgets

1. **Revenue Budget Adjustments** - Since the budget was approved by Members in February it has been necessary to action some adjustments to the budget in the form of virements. These invariably relate to adjustments between revenue budgets and earmarked reserves, for example reflecting identified slippage or the funding of inflationary in-year pressures such as the pay award this year, but they do not change the overall net budget. Details of all budget changes are shown in **Appendices 1 and 2** (subjective analysis, by type of expenditure) and **Appendices 3 and 4** (functional analysis, by service area).
2. **Revenue Budget Summary** - The revenue budget for the current financial year is £71.573m. Whilst it is still relatively early days in terms of the volume of expenditure spent and committed, current forecasts are indicating that the anticipated outturn is likely to be an underspend of some £1.201m. This includes a forecast net underspend of £1.054m on pay-related budget headings and the balance of £147k against non-pay budgets.
3. Salaries and pay-related on-costs account for around 88% of the Authority's net budgeted expenditure in 2021/22, and as such this area of spend is monitored very closely. Whilst a proportion of pay is fairly stable and similar each month, there is volatility in a number of areas such as overtime, on-call firefighters pay, and time taken to fill vacancies for example. Currently a large element of the forecast pay underspend relates to time taken to fill and recruit to staff vacancies. Invariably the notice period given by individuals is significantly less than the time taken to recruit to a new post. But in relation to firefighter vacancies this is compounded by the obvious need to train the new recruits. In the first year of training a new recruit is paid at the development rate of pay, and then after a year they progress to the competent rate of pay. Therefore, this too leads to reduced levels of spend against the budget, which contributes to the overall underspend. In addition, on-call operational activity payments have, so far, been lower than initially expected. Although activity payments are expected to increase, if the profile of activity differs from what is forecast then this too will have an impact on the final outturn.
4. On 27 July the National Employers' made an increased offer for the 2021/22 corporate staff / green book pay award of 1.75% (up from 1.5%) but, at this stage, the offer has not been accepted. An additional 0.25% increase on corporate staff pay equates to an additional budget pressure of around £35k, which can be managed within existing budget allocations for 2021/22. The final agreed pay settlement for corporate staff will be reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2022-26, along with the pay settlements that have already been confirmed for operational staff and senior officers (full year impact

estimated at £900k). Members may wish to note, that as agreed some £503k has been drawn down from the Resource Reserve to fund the two pay awards that have been agreed to date.

5. **Appendices 5 to 8** attached to this report, provide further details by functional and subjective headings, of the reason for the spend variances against the approved budget.
6. **Infrastructure and Capital Spend** - The Infrastructure Plan contains all planned capital expenditure and some large one-off revenue expenditure, such as investment in IT projects. Since the last report to Members in July, the capital budget has been reduced by £215k from £5.179m to £4.964m. The budget reduction is due to the extended lead time for delivery of the Prime Mover vehicle, which is now expected to be delivered after the 31 March. Details of the Infrastructure Plan can be seen at **Appendix 9**. Infrastructure expenditure budgets and budgeted transfers from the infrastructure reserve have been adjusted to reflect the revised forecast outturn for the year.
7. **Capital Receipts and Other Usable Reserves** - The opening balance of the capital receipts reserve, on 1 April 2021, was £7.875m. The planned use of capital receipts to part-fund capital expenditure in 2021/22 is no longer required due to slippage on the capital budget. Three vacant properties have recently been sold at auction generating capital receipts totalling £854k (more details are provided at paragraph 13). As such, if the sale of a number of other vacant premises and the surplus land on the old Medway Fire Station site is completed in 2021/22, then the capital receipts reserve could stand at around £10m by the end of the 2021/22 financial year.
8. **Reserves** - The Authority maintains a general reserve balance, representing approximately 5% (£3.7m) of the base revenue budget and a small number of earmarked reserves, although by far the largest is the infrastructure reserve (opening balance at 1 April 2021 of £27m), which funds a significant proportion of the capital and revenue spend on Infrastructure assets. Details and forecast closing balances on these reserves are attached at **Appendix 10**.

### **Budget Issues and Risks**

9. In line with the Authority's approach to risk management, potential budget risks have been identified and assessed in terms of probability and impact. At this stage of the financial year, the following risks remain: -
  - a) **Operational Pay** - The level of whole-time operational overtime is dependent on several factors, for example incident levels in terms of frequency and duration, sickness cover and the use of bank shifts. A variation to the estimates used when generating the current forecast will impact on the final

outturn. On-call payments are also difficult to predict as a large proportion of costs relate to incident levels which vary from year to year.

- b) **Corporate Staff Pay** - An assumption has been made regarding start dates against vacant posts, however the actual position may differ to the assumption made and will therefore have an impact on the final outturn. Similarly, if a post becomes vacant and recruitment is delayed or an efficiency is taken by deleting the post from the establishment, then further underspends may arise during the year.
- c) **Operational Retirements and Recruitment** - The McCloud / Sargeant pensions remedy, and in particular Immediate Detriment cases (firefighters who retire from the scheme before the secondary regulations are amended to bring in the age discrimination remedies), could result in more retirements this year than initially anticipated. The timing of retirements and subsequent recruitment into vacant posts, including the essential training timeframe of new firefighter recruits, may result in additional underspends during the year.
- d) **Energy Prices** - Wholesale gas prices have increased significantly in the last year and this has also pushed up electricity prices because Britain generates around a third of its electricity from burning natural gas. Although a fixed price contract is currently in place for the supply of gas, the Authority has a variable contract for its electricity supplies so there is the possibility that at least a proportion of the increase in costs will be passed on by the supplier resulting in an overspend against this budget heading. However, expenditure in this area will be closely monitored as we progress through the year.
- e) **Rates** – A review is currently underway to evaluate the Authority's business rate bills to ensure current rateable values of our premises are appropriate. Several backdated refunds have already been confirmed, so it is likely that there will be an underspend on the rates budget this year, but the actual amount is currently unknown as it is dependent on the number of successful appeals.
- f) **Covid-19 Costs** - The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in additional costs for the Authority, which to date, have been funded by government grants, totalling £1.851m. Unspent grant amounting to £430k was rolled forward for use in 2021/22 and, of that amount, around £177k has been spent to date (£143k on pay costs and £34k on non-pay related costs). If costs continue, and no additional funding is made available then some expenditure may need to be funded from existing resources.
- g) **Prices Inflation and Programme Slippage** – The current economic environment is such that certain parts of the economy are experiencing either a shortfall in availability or a hike in prices. Within this organisation we have seen issues with supplies, including increased lead times for the delivery of



certain goods, in particular vehicles. A large proportion of the capital budget has already been slipped to 2022/23, but further slippage may occur if goods, which are currently expected to be delivered, aren't delivered before the end of the financial year. In addition, some planned revenue expenditure may be delayed until next financial year if supplier availability is limited or if there are issues with the supply of materials required to carry out the works.

## **Other Financial Issues**

### **Property Update**

10. **Ashford Redevelopment** - Members will be aware of the plans to build a new live fire training facility at Ashford Fire Station, which is very much needed, in addition to improving the station itself, for which an estimated funding allocation has already been approved. Work has been progressing well, and as such we are currently at the end of the concept design stage. Due diligence work is now underway with regards to a number of surveys i.e., ecological, flood risk and pre-planning feasibility. The next step is to submit the pre-planning application to Ashford Borough Council, which will then be followed by the full planning application towards the end of this calendar year. However, it may be at least spring next year before we are informed of the outcome of our application.
11. Currently we have engaged the services of a contractor to help with the planning and associated work in relation to this development. Members may recall that previously they had agreed an allocation of £6m (albeit this was very much an early estimate) for this critical infrastructure development. As with all projects of this size, once planning design gets underway, requirements are expanded upon, and costs invariably increase. Added to this, the economic environment is quite volatile for a number of reasons and as such, we are likely to see a significant cost increase in building materials, a possible lack of availability of some materials and potential labour shortages.
12. Consequently, current cost indications have increased significantly for this critical infrastructure project, to in the region of between £10m - £13m. At this stage Members are asked to agree to note the possible increase in costs, but a further update will be provided once the outcome of the planning application is known, and a firmer cost base and timescales are established. At that stage Members will be asked to confirm their agreement to the full financial commitment. Members can be assured that we will only progress to the building stage (gateway three), once planning approval has been confirmed and Members have agreed to allocate the additional resources that are likely to be needed, once final costs are known.
13. **Disposal of Vacant Properties** - Three vacant houses have recently sold at auction generating capital receipts for the Authority totalling £854k. 20 Dernier Road, Tonbridge sold for £321k, 118 Kingfisher Road, Larkfield sold for £305k

and 9 Vulcan Close, Whitstable sold for £228k. The sale proceeds from each disposal are in line with the forecast capital receipts expected for these properties.

### **Firefighters Pension Fund 2021/22**

14. **The Firefighters' Pension Fund for 2021/22** - Attached at **Appendix 11** is the forecast outturn for the Firefighters' Pension Fund for 2021/22. Firefighter pension costs that are related to injury whilst on duty are met by the Authority, whereas the majority of other firefighter pension costs are funded by the Government. Whilst the Authority is responsible for paying all pensions and collecting all contributions, the resultant net deficit is funded by top-up grant which is paid by the Government in July each year.
15. The forecast for the top-up grant requirement for 2021/22 has increased by £4.508m since the previous forecast submitted to the Home Office in September 2020. The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill, introduced by the Government to Parliament on 19 July 2021, legislates how the Government will remove the discrimination identified by the courts in the way that the 2015 scheme reforms were introduced for some members. To address the discrimination identified by the courts, the government has set out that when the 'remedy period' ends on 31 March 2022, anyone who remains in service will do so as a member of the reformed scheme. Current indications are that far more staff than previously expected will now retire under their legacy scheme, before they are moved into the reformed scheme on 1 April 2022, resulting in additional lump sum payments in 2021/22. There is an element of uncertainty in this forecast and things will become much clearer as we head towards the 31 March 2022.

### **Grants Update**

16. At the July meeting of the Authority Members were notified of additional new grant allocations for 2021/22 of; up to £480k from the government for fire protection work and up to £128k from the Department for Transport (DfT) (£100k) and Road Safety Trust (£28k) for the Pre-driver Theatre and Workshop Education Research (PdTWER) project. The current forecast is for the full £480k government grant for protection work to be received and spent in 2021/22 and for £78k of the PdTWER project grants to be received and spent in 2021/22.

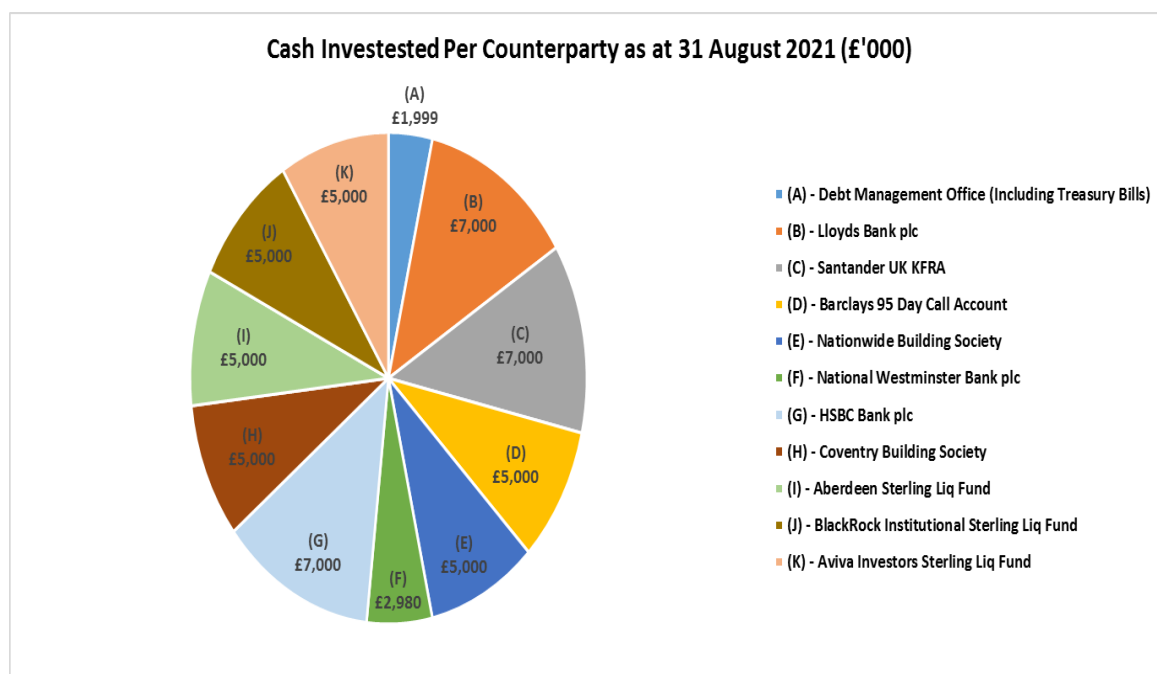
### **Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-26**

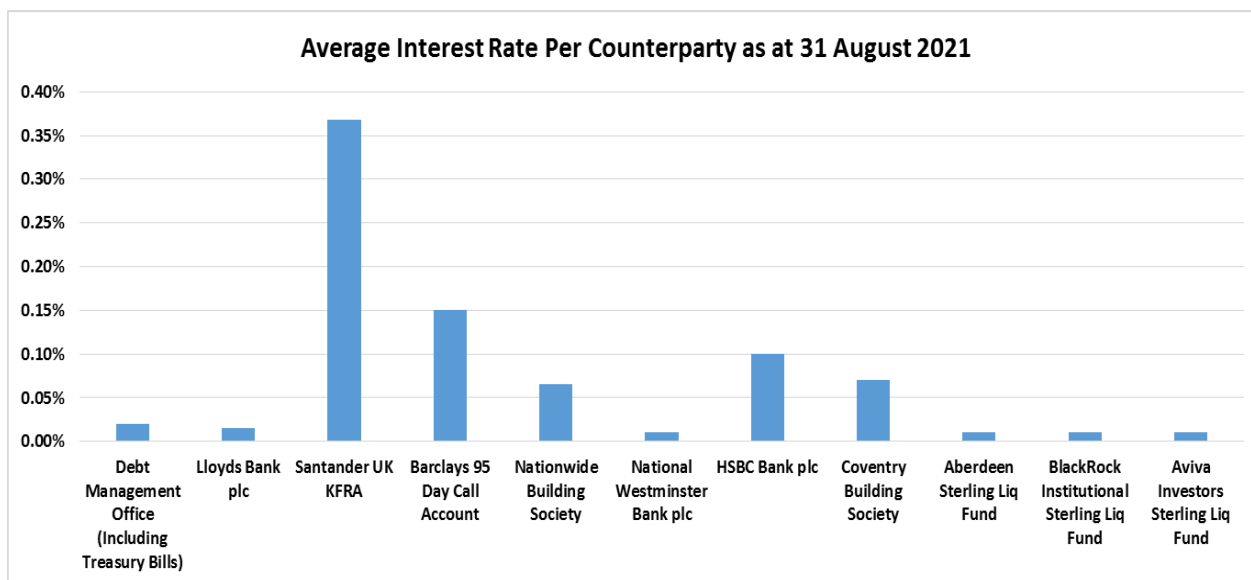
16. **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022-26 Development** - There were few funding announcements from the Government over the summer, but a very busy autumn is now expected with the launch of the Spending Review (and its related envelope) on 7 September 2021. All expectations are that there will be a return

to a multi-year funding settlement, which would be welcomed by many, as it does help significantly with longer term sustainable budgeting. However, indications on potential funding reforms, including the implementation of the Fair Funding Review and the reset of Business Rates baselines are that they are likely to be deferred until 2023/24 at the earliest. There will be a Spending Review announcement on the 27 October 2021, and as such the provisional settlement will follow some weeks later. A presentation will be given to Members, later on this agenda, in relation to our early thinking and proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2022 – 2026.

### Cash Invested and Average Interest Rates per Counterparty 2021/22

17. **Cash Invested** - Between April 2021 and August 2021 the Authority invested an average cash balance of £49.3m. The pie chart below shows the balance invested as of 31 August 2021 (£55.979m) which has a forecast investment income for the year of £45k. The bar chart details current interest rate levels paid on these deposits.





## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

## RECOMMENDATIONS

19. Members are requested to:
- 19.1 Agree to note the indicative project cost for the redevelopment of the Live Fire training facilities at Ashford Fire Station (paragraph 10 to 12 refers).
- 19.2 Consider and note the content of the report.

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**2021/22 Revenue Budget Adjustments – Subjective Analysis**

Figures shown are in £'000	Original Budget	Budget Changes	Revised Budget
Salaries, allowances and on-costs	62,212	901	63,113
Training expenses	754	23	777
Other employee costs(inc. Insurance)	775	1	776
Direct pension costs	1,871	0	1,871
<b>Total Employee Costs</b>	<b>65,612</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>66,537</b>
Repairs, maintenance & other costs	2,688	1,288	3,976
Utility costs	2,245	40	2,285
<b>Total Premises Costs</b>	<b>4,933</b>	<b>1,328</b>	<b>6,261</b>
Vehicle running costs	2,164	126	2,290
Travel allowances and expenses	89	-2	87
<b>Total Transport Costs</b>	<b>2,253</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>2,377</b>
Equipment and supplies	3,277	-627	2,650
Fees and services	1,225	96	1,321
Communications and computing	5,525	-581	4,944
Other supplies and services	575	23	598
<b>Total Supplies and Services</b>	<b>10,602</b>	<b>-1,089</b>	<b>9,513</b>
Capital financing costs	1,025	0	1,025
Revenue contributions to Capital	5,453	-489	4,964
<b>Total Capital Financing</b>	<b>6,478</b>	<b>-489</b>	<b>5,989</b>
Grants and contributions	-7,677	-644	-8,321
Investment income	-45	0	-45
Other income	-268	0	-268
Transfers from reserves	-10,315	-155	-10,470
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-18,305</b>	<b>-799</b>	<b>-19,104</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>71,573</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>71,573</b>

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### 2021/22 Revenue Budget Adjustments - Subjective Analysis Explanations

Individual virements (budget transfers) that exceed £50k are required to be reported to Members. Any individual virements that are not technical budget adjustments that exceed £500k require Member approval. There are no virements which require Member approval in this report.

- (a) **Salaries, allowances and on-costs (£901k Increase)** – In line with Member's approval, this budget has been increased by £544k following confirmation of a 1.5% pay award for operational staff and senior officers for 2021/22 (£41k is offset by additional income where posts are externally funded and £503k is offset by a transfer from the Insurance and Resource Reserve both reported under separate subjective headings). To date, additional pay costs totalling £143k have been incurred as a direct result of Covid-19, and as such the budget has been increased to cover these additional costs, although they are offset by covid grant funding. Some funding (£77k) allocated to the Time and Attendance project has been realigned to this heading from the Communications and Computing heading as two new project team members have been recruited for the duration of the project. Furthermore, additional budget has been allocated to reflect the recruitment of two temporary posts, which are externally funded (£83k). Other minor adjustments around start dates and end dates for some other temporary posts have resulted in a net budget increase of £54k.
- (b) **Repairs, maintenance and other costs (£1.288m Increase)** - At the April meeting of the Authority, Members agreed to transfer £1m of the final 2020/21 underspend to the Infrastructure Reserve to fund improvements and alterations at a number of premises across the County, including service Headquarters. Therefore, an additional £1m budget has been added to the budget to fund these accommodation changes in 2021/22 however, due to potential issues with supplier availability, there is a risk that these works may not be completed before the end of the financial year. A further £366k was slipped from 2020/21, so the additional budget required to fund works that were not completed last financial year, due to Covid-19, has been added to the budget for 2021/22. Minor budget realignments to other subjective headings total £78k.
- (c) **Vehicle Purchase and Running Costs (£126k Increase)** - The Covid-19 pandemic meant that some fleet servicing works were not able to be completed in 2020/21, so £126k was slipped from 2020/21 to fund the additional expenditure that is now expected to be incurred in 2021/22.
- (d) **Equipment and supplies (£627k Decrease)** - The original budget included an assumption that £752k of unspent Covid-19 grant would be rolled forward in

reserves and spent under this heading in 2021/22. However, this level of spend on this area of activity has not been realised and as such the budgets have been adjusted accordingly. There has been a budget increase of £82k where some equipment purchases that were originally planned for 2020/21 have slipped to 2021/22. Other minor adjustments total a net budget increase of £43k.

- (e) **Fees and Services (£96k Increase)** - The Pre-driver Theatre and Workshop Education Research (PdTWER) project is due to commence in the autumn. A budget of £53k has been loaded against this heading for costs that are expected to fall in this financial year, but this is offset by an increase in the grant income budget as funding for this project has been secured from the Department for Transport. An additional budget of £5k has been loaded due to the increase in the charge for the external audit of the statement of accounts. This additional charge is specifically in relation to costs resulting from Covid-19, so is offset by a budgeted transfer from the Covid-19 grant reserve. Other minor realignments from other budget headings total £38k.
- (f) **Communications and computing (£581k Decrease)** - This budget has been reduced by £1.090m as expenditure on some infrastructure projects has slipped to 2022/23 (see (p)). Some funding (£77k) allocated to the Time and Attendance project has been realigned from this heading to the salaries, allowances and on-costs heading as two project team members have been employed as members of staff for the duration of the project, so IT consultancy costs are reduced. These reductions are partly offset by a budget increase of £622k in relation to additional costs for improving capability within fire protection (new grant for 2021/22 £480k (see (h))) and £142k existing funding which has been realigned from other headings. Other minor net increases to the budget total £36k.
- (g) **Revenue Contributions to Capital (£489k Decrease)** - The budget for revenue contributions to fund capital expenditure in 2021/22 has been reduced as a result of slippage on the capital budget.
- (h) **Grants and Contributions (£644k Increase in Income)** - The majority of this budget increase relates to the additional £480k grant income that the government has confirmed for 2021/22 for FRAs to further increase capability and capacity within fire protection. In addition, grants totalling £78k are now expected from the Department for Transport to cover all costs expected to fall in 2021/22 in relation to the PdTWER project. Additional income totalling £86k is now expected in relation to cost recovery where several employees have been released on external secondments.
- (i) **Transfers from reserves (£155k Increase)** - Budgeted transfers from the Rolling Budget Reserve have increased by £615k (see (b), (c) and (d) plus other minor slippage adjustments totalling £41k). Budgeted transfers from the Insurance and Resource Reserve have increased by £503k (see (a)). Budgeted transfers from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve have increased by £104k (see

(s)). Budgeted transfers from the Infrastructure Reserve have been reduced by £575k (see (s)). Budgeted transfers from Government Grant Reserves have reduced by £492k (see (d) for main explanation).



# KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

## 2021/22 Revenue Budget Adjustments – Functional Analysis

Figures shown are in £'000	Original Budget	Budget Changes	Revised Budget
Firefighting and Rescue Services	32,316	1,038	33,354
Control	2,152	10	2,162
Operational Policy and Resilience	4,103	-444	3,659
Fleet and Transport	2,820	13	2,833
<b>Total Operational Response and Resilience</b>	<b>41,391</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>42,008</b>
Customer Safety	2,830	70	2,900
Business Safety	2,337	-28	2,309
Customer Engagement	772	222	994
<b>Total Customer Safety, Business Safety and Engagement</b>	<b>5,939</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>6,203</b>
Corporate Management Board and Business Support	2,258	-55	2,203
Member Allowances and Expenses	82	0	82
People and Learning	6,170	-55	6,115
Business Change and Information Technology	7,612	-1,261	6,351
Property, Environment and Facilities	5,454	1,009	6,463
Finance, Insurance and Procurement	2,409	-494	1,915
Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance	703	-8	695
<b>Total Corporate Costs</b>	<b>24,688</b>	<b>-864</b>	<b>23,824</b>
Pension Costs	1,871	0	1,871
Net Financing Costs	980	0	980
Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves	-83	-17	-100
Non-Ring Fenced Grants	-3,326	0	-3,326
Admin for Council Tax Support	113	0	113
<b>Total Pensions, Financing and Other Costs</b>	<b>-445</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-462</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>71,573</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>71,573</b>

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### 2021/22 Revenue Budget Adjustments – Functional Analysis Explanations

Individual virements (budget transfers) that exceed £50k are required to be reported to Members. Any individual virements that are not technical budget adjustments that exceed £500k require Member approval.

Reportable virements are detailed below;

- (j) **Firefighting and Rescue Services (£1.038m Increase)** - This budget has been increased by £762k due to the realignment of the grant income budget for the fire pensions grant which has been reapportioned across the relevant functional headings to match anticipated expenditure. In addition, £394k has been added to this budget for the 1.5% pay award that has been confirmed for operational staff. These increases are partly offset by a budget reduction of £95k where a pay budget has been realigned to the People and Learning heading. Other minor net reductions to this budget heading total £23k.
- (k) **Operational Policy and Resilience (£444k Decrease)** - This budget has been reduced by £430k due to the realignment of the grant income budget for the fire pensions grant (see (a)). This is partly offset by an increase of £19k for the 1.5% pay award that has been confirmed for operational staff. Other minor net reductions to the budget total £33k.
- (l) **Customer Safety (£70k Increase)** - This budget has been increased by £94k due to additional pay budgets for two temporary posts which are funded by a corresponding transfer from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve. In addition, the budget has been increased by £7k for the 1.5% pay award that has been confirmed for operational staff. These increases are partly offset by a budget reduction of £42k due to the realignment of the grant income budget for the fire pensions grant (see (a)). Other minor net increases to the budget total £11k.
- (m) **Customer Engagement (£222k Increase)** - The budget for the Digital Experience Platform has been transferred to this heading from the Business Change and Information Technology heading. Other minor net budget increases total £16k, where budgets have been transferred from other functional headings.
- (n) **Corporate Management Board and Business Support Team (£55k Decrease)** - This budget has been reduced by £55k due to the realignment of the grant income budget for the fire pensions grant (see (a)). This is partly offset by an increase of £26k for the 1.5% pay award that has been confirmed for senior officers. Other minor net budget reductions, where budgets have been transferred to other functional headings total £26k.

- (o) **People and Learning (£55k Decrease)** - This budget has been reduced by £176k due to the realignment of the grant income budget for the fire pensions grant (see (a)). This is partly offset by an increase of £95k where a post has been transferred from the Firefighting and Rescue Services heading and an increase of £26k for the 1.5% pay award that has been confirmed for operational staff.
- (p) **Business Change and Information Technology (£1.261m Decrease)** - This budget reduction mainly relates to infrastructure projects where some expenditure has slipped to 2022/23 and is therefore offset by a corresponding transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve. Project expenditure that has slipped includes; Improvement of Customer and Premises Risk Management (£278k), Command and Control (£210k), Fleet Management (£200k), Time and Attendance (£149k), Desktop Refresh (£103k), Asset Management (£100k) and Hydra Replacement (£50k). In addition, the budget for the Digital Experience Platform has been transferred to the Customer Engagement heading. Other net budget increases total £35k.
- (q) **Property, Environmental and Facilities (£1.009m Increase)** - At the April meeting of the Authority, Members agreed to transfer £1m of the final 2020/21 underspend to the Infrastructure Reserve to fund improvements and alterations at a number of premises across the County, including service Headquarters. Therefore, an additional £1m budget has been added to fund the accommodation changes in 2021/22 but, due to potential issues with supplier availability, there is a risk that these works may not complete before year end. This increase is offset by a corresponding transfer from the Infrastructure Reserve. Other minor net budget increases total £9k.
- (r) **Finance, Insurance & Procurement (£494k Decrease)** - This budget decrease mainly relates to the transfer of £503k from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to fund the 1.5% pay award agreed for operational staff and senior officers (budget increases are reflected across other functional headings). Other minor net budget increases total £9k.
- (s) **Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves (£17k Additional Funding from Reserves)** - Budgeted transfers from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve have increased by £104k as some new temporary posts have been agreed during the year and some existing temporary posts have been extended. The majority of this change is explained in (l). This is partly offset by a reduced budgeted transfer of £575k from the Infrastructure Revenue Reserve where there is a net reduction in amounts required for 2021/22 due to slippage (£488k of this amount is offset by reduced revenue contributions to capital). The majority of this change is explained in (p) and (q).

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**2021/22 Revenue Budget – Subjective Analysis**

Figures shown are in £'000	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
Salaries, allowances and on-costs	63,113	62,059	-1,054
Training expenses	777	779	2
Other employee costs(inc. Insurance)	776	575	-201
Direct pension costs	1,871	1,871	0
<b>Total Employee Costs</b>	<b>66,537</b>	<b>65,284</b>	<b>-1,253</b>
Repairs, maintenance & other costs	3,976	3,971	-5
Utility costs	2,285	2,285	0
<b>Total Premises Costs</b>	<b>6,261</b>	<b>6,256</b>	<b>-5</b>
Vehicle running costs	2,290	2,228	-62
Travel allowances and expenses	87	57	-30
<b>Total Transport Costs</b>	<b>2,377</b>	<b>2,285</b>	<b>-92</b>
Equipment and supplies	2,650	2,653	3
Fees and services	1,321	1,345	24
Communications and computing	4,944	4,872	-72
Other supplies and services	598	625	27
<b>Total Supplies and Services</b>	<b>9,513</b>	<b>9,495</b>	<b>-18</b>
Capital financing costs	1,025	1,025	0
Revenue contributions to Capital	4,964	4,964	0
<b>Total Capital Financing</b>	<b>5,989</b>	<b>5,989</b>	<b>0</b>
Grants and contributions	-8,321	-8,211	110
Investment income	-45	-46	-1
Other income	-268	-210	58
Transfers from reserves	-10,470	-10,470	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-19,104</b>	<b>-18,937</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>71,573</b>	<b>70,372</b>	<b>-1,201</b>

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### Significant Variances and Movements in the 2021/22 Revenue Budget

#### Subjective Variance Analysis

The forecast net underspend of £1.201m is made up of a variety of underspend and overspends, and the reasons for the most significant variances are commented on below:-

#### Base Budget Variances

- a) **Salaries, allowances and on-costs (£1.054m underspend)** – Explanations are provided under the relevant functional headings at Appendix 8.
- b) **Other employee costs (inc. Insurance) (£201k underspend)** - This underspend mainly relates to the reversal of unused provisions which are no longer required as the costs in relation to the provisions have now been settled.
- c) **Vehicle running costs (£62k underspend)** - The fuel budget is forecast to underspend by £100k where usage remains low compared to pre-Covid-19 levels. This is partly offset by a forecast overspend of £40k on the vehicle repairs and maintenance budget due to an unusually high increase in the cost of replacement parts, which in some cases have increased by up to 10%. Other minor forecast net underspends total £2k.
- d) **Communications and computing (£72k underspend)** - Slippage on the Improvement of Customer and Premises Risk Management project and the Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) project has led to an underspend of £96k where the ongoing cost of software licences has been delayed. Other minor net overspends total £24k.
- e) **Grants and contributions (£110k Reduced Income)** - The Home Office has confirmed that there was an error in the calculation of the 2020/21 Firelink grant, reducing the grant by £40k, and as such this will now need to be repaid for 2020/21. In addition, following the recalculations a lower than expected amount is now due for 2021/22, resulting in a grant of £592k instead of £636k (budget estimate was £624k). The net impact of this is a forecast overspend of £72k in 2021/22. In addition, an estimate was used when closing the 2020/21 accounts, in relation to the amount that is owed to the Authority for Business Rates Section 31 grant. Outturn figures have now been confirmed by District Council's and Medway Council and a lower amount than originally estimated has been confirmed, resulting in reduced income of £74k against budgeted

figures for 2021/22. These reductions are partly offset by increased income from staff secondments and the recovery of additional costs in relation to the operational staff pay award where some posts are externally funded.

- f) **Other income (£58k Reduced Income)** - As some new vehicle purchases have slipped to 2022/23 in the capital programme, income from the sale of existing vehicles is forecast to be £60k lower than originally estimated. Other minor net additional income totals £2k.

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**2021/22 Revenue Budget – Functional Analysis**

Figures shown are in £'000	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
Firefighting and Rescue Services	33,354	32,833	-521
Control	2,162	1,961	-201
Operational Policy and Resilience	3,659	3,700	41
Fleet and Transport	2,833	2,904	71
<b>Total Operational Response and Resilience</b>	<b>42,008</b>	<b>41,398</b>	<b>-610</b>
Customer Safety	2,900	2,712	-188
Business Safety	2,309	2,238	-71
Customer Engagement	994	989	-5
<b>Total Customer Safety, Business Safety and Engagement</b>	<b>6,203</b>	<b>5,939</b>	<b>-264</b>
Corporate Management Board and Business Support	2,203	2,259	56
Member Allowances and Expenses	82	82	0
People and Learning	6,115	6,009	-106
Business Change and Information Technology	6,351	6,120	-231
Property, Environment and Facilities	6,463	6,415	-48
Finance, Insurance and Procurement	1,915	1,789	-126
Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance	695	750	55
<b>Total Corporate Costs</b>	<b>23,824</b>	<b>23,424</b>	<b>-400</b>
Pension Costs	1,871	1,871	0
Net Financing Costs	980	979	-1
Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves	-100	-100	0
Non-Ring Fenced Grants	-3,326	-3,252	74
Admin for Council Tax Support	113	113	0
<b>Total Pensions, Financing and Other Costs</b>	<b>-462</b>	<b>-389</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>71,573</b>	<b>70,372</b>	<b>-1,201</b>

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### Significant Variances and Movements in the 2021/22 Revenue Budget

#### Functional Variance Analysis

The forecast net underspend of £1.201m 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

- g) **Firefighting and Rescue Services (£521k Underspend)** – To date, on-call activity payments have been lower than initially expected resulting in a forecast underspend of £296k. Activity payments are expected to increase over the coming months, but if payments do not match projections this will affect the final outturn position. Vacancies on whole-time fire stations have led to underspends of £176k, though several recruit courses are well underway meaning these vacancies will be filled once the new recruits have completed their initial 20-week training programme. Other minor net underspends total £49k (£18k on pay headings and £31k non-pay headings).
- h) **Control (£201k Underspend)** - This forecast underspend is entirely pay budget related. There are currently four vacancies within the team and recruitment into these posts is expected to commence shortly. In addition, five new starters joined in April so they will be on development rate of pay for most of the financial year but the budget for these posts has been built at the competent rate of pay.
- i) **Fleet & Transport (£71k Overspend)** - The vehicle repairs and maintenance budget is forecast to overspend by £40k, mainly due to an unusually high increase in the cost of replacement parts, which in some cases have increased by up to 10%. As some new vehicle purchases have slipped to 2022/23 in the capital programme, income from the sale of existing vehicles is forecast to be £60k lower than originally estimated. These forecast variances are offset by a forecast underspend of £100k on vehicle fuel, where usage remains low compared to pre-Covid-19 levels. There is a forecast overspend of £65k against pay budgets for two temporary posts within the team, but this is offset by a transfer from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve so although it appears as an overspend against this functional heading, it doesn't impact on the bottom line. Other minor forecast net overspends on non-pay headings total £6k.



- j) **Customer Safety (£188k Underspend)** - This forecast underspend relates entirely to pay budgets and although most of the posts within this team have now been filled, two posts currently remain vacant. In Addition, several posts that are budgeted as full-time posts have been recruited to on a part-time basis resulting in further underspends.
- k) **Building Safety (£71k Underspend)** - Most of the vacancies within this team have now been filled, but savings generated whilst posts were vacant have led to a forecast underspend on pay budgets of £78k. Other minor forecast net overspends on non-pay headings total £7k.
- l) **Corporate Management Board & Business Support (£56k Overspend)** - Three senior operational officers have retired this year so an overspend of £79k is forecast on pay costs due to the handover periods for these posts. This is partly offset by a forecast underspend on staff travel costs where many external courses are still being held virtually, meaning staff do not need to travel to these events.
- m) **People & Learning (£106k Underspend)** - There are several vacancies for Business Support apprentices which have not been recruited to, resulting in a forecast underspend of £61k. Other minor forecast net underspends on pay headings total £45k.
- n) **Business Change and Information Technology (£231k Underspend)** - The majority of this forecast underspend relates to vacancies within the team. Some underspends have occurred where staff have left during the year and other underspends have occurred due to unsuccessful attempts to recruit into posts that were vacant at the start of the year, meaning the posts have been vacant for longer than initially anticipated. Currently, there are four budgeted posts that are vacant within this team. One new starter is expected to join the team in November and two vacant posts have recently been re-advertised.
- o) **Finance, Insurance and Procurement (£126k Underspend)** - This forecast underspend mainly relates to the reversal of unused provisions which are no longer required as the costs in relation to the provisions have now been settled. The is partly offset by a forecast overspend of £54k where a new post has been agreed during the year and other minor net forecast overspends totalling £21k.
- p) **Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance (£55k Overspend)** - A new post has been added to this team during the year resulting in a forecast overspend of £42k. Other minor forecast net overspends total £13k.
- q) **Non-Ring Fenced Grants (£74k Reduced Income)** - An estimate was used when closing the 2020/21 accounts, in relation to the amount that is owed to the Authority for Business Rates Section 31 grant. Outturn figures have now

been confirmed by District Council's and Medway Council and a lower amount than originally estimated has been confirmed, resulting in reduced income against budgeted figures for 2021/22.

**Appendix 9 to  
Item No: B1**

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**2021/22 Infrastructure Budget Adjustments**

Figures shown are in £'000

	<b>July Budget</b>	<b>Budget Changes</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>
<b>Infrastructure Capital Budget</b>			
Ashford Fire Station	650	0	650
<b>Total Station Development Programme</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>650</b>
Generators	12	0	12
Roofing Works	600	0	600
Boilers	12	0	12
<b>Total Premises</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>624</b>
Mobile Data Terminals	524	0	524
<b>Total Information and Communication Systems</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>524</b>
Appliances	678	0	678
Specialist Units and Vehicles	440	-215	225
Cars and Vans	2,263	0	2,263
<b>Total Vehicles and Equipment</b>	<b>3,381</b>	<b>-215</b>	<b>3,166</b>
<b>Total Infrastructure Capital Budget</b>	<b>5,179</b>	<b>-215</b>	<b>4,964</b>
<b>Infrastructure Revenue Budget</b>			
Premises	1,744	-43	1,701
Equipment	65	0	65
Information and Comms. Systems	2,404	-683	1,721
<b>Total Infrastructure Revenue Budget</b>	<b>4,213</b>	<b>-726</b>	<b>3,487</b>
<b>Total Infrastructure Revenue and Capital Budgets</b>	<b>9,392</b>	<b>-941</b>	<b>8,451</b>
<b>Funded from:-</b>			
Base Revenue Contributions	-3,792	0	-3,792
Infrastructure Reserve	-5,527	941	-4,586
One-off funding & grants	-73	0	-73
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>-9,392</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>-8,451</b>

# KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

## 2021/22 General and Earmarked Reserves

Figures shown are in £'000		Opening Balance 01-Apr-21	Forecast Transfer 2021/22	Forecast Closing Balance 31-Mar-22
General Reserve	(A)	3,710	50	3,760
<i>Earmarked Reserves:</i>				
Government Grants	(B)	5,615	-4,001	1,614
Infrastructure	(C)	27,045	-4,586	22,459
Insurance and Resource	(C)	3,585	-502	3,083
Rolling Budgets	(C)	1,074	-903	171
Service Transformation and Productivity	(C)	902	-528	374
Total Earmarked Reserves		38,221	-10,520	27,701
<b>Total Revenue Reserves</b>		<b>41,931</b>	<b>-10,470</b>	<b>31,461</b>
Capital Receipts	(D)	7,875	854	8,729
<b>Total Capital Reserves</b>		<b>7,875</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>8,729</b>
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>		<b>49,806</b>	<b>-9,616</b>	<b>40,190</b>

### Notes:

- Reserve held to provide a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected costs
- Resource provided by Government with any unspent amounts rolled forward
- Reserve held to smooth the impact of expenditure on the revenue budget
- 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). The forecast transfer for 2021/22 only includes capital receipts already received in 2021/22.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2021/22 Firefighters' Pension Fund

Figures shown are in £'000	Home Office Return (Sept 20)	Forecast Outturn	Total Variance
<b>Pension Outgoings:</b>			
Pension payments	22,549	27,363	4,814
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>22,549</b>	<b>27,363</b>	<b>4,814</b>
<b>Pension Income:</b>			
Employee contributions	3,683	3,751	68
Employer contributions	8,276	8,393	117
In-year ill-health charge income	306	273	-33
Non-abated pension income	91	194	103
Transfer values received	0	51	51
Government top-up grant	10,193	14,701	4,508
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>22,549</b>	<b>27,363</b>	<b>4,814</b>
<b>Net Fund Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

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By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services  
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 14 October 2021  
Subject: EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE FOR 2020/21  
Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

Members may recall that the draft set of Financial Statements for 2020/21 were presented at the July Authority meeting, alongside the draft of the Auditor's Findings Report. At that stage the External Auditor's had more reviews to complete and as such having now completed all their work in relation to the Financial Statements, they are now able to provide their opinion on the final accounts for the year ended 2020/21.

However, they are not yet able to formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until they have completed their work on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. As such their Annual Report will be delayed until they have completed their assessment, which they expect to be sometime in the next three months.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Consider the External Auditor's Opinion of the accounts for the 2020/21 financial year (paragraph 3 and **Appendix 1** refer).
2. Consider and note the remaining contents of the report

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Finance Manager – Nikki walker  
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EMAIL: [nicola.walker@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:nicola.walker@kent.fire-uk.org)  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Financial Statements and Opinion

1. In light of the many challenges that all public sector bodies and external auditors are facing, given the Covid-pandemic, the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 agreed to extend the statutory audit deadlines, for the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22, for all local authorities. This resulted in the publication date for the audited accounts to be moved from the 31 July to 30 September in those respective years.
2. Members may recall that the draft Findings Report presented to the Authority meeting in July, highlighted a number of issues that were outstanding and further work needed to be undertaken in these areas, for example in relation to pension valuations.
3. In order for the signing of the formal accounts to take place and subsequent issuing of the Opinion, the Authority is required to issue a signed letter of Representation. Members will recall that a draft letter was agreed at the July Authority meeting, however minor adjustments to that letter were subsequently needed and as such this was discussed with the Chair of the Authority as urgent action. The additional points that were incorporated into the letter are detailed below for Member's information:
  - a) Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable. Such accounting estimates include land and building valuations, depreciation, provisions, the valuation of defined benefit net pension fund liabilities, investments and loan fair value estimates, accruals and credit loss impairment allowances
  - b) 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:
    - the nature of the Authority means that, notwithstanding any intention to liquidate the Authority or cease its operations in their current form, it will continue to be appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of accounting because, in such an event, services it performs can be expected to continue to be delivered by related public authorities and preparing the financial statements on a going concern basis will still provide a faithful representation of the items in the financial statements.
    - the financial reporting framework permits the entity to prepare its financial statements on the basis of the presumption set out under a) above, and
    - the Authority's system of internal control has not identified any events or conditions relevant to a going concern.



4. Following the issuing of this letter, it is now pleasing to be able to confirm that Grant Thornton provided their final opinion on the accounts on the 30 September, just within the statutory deadline. As such a copy is attached at **Appendix 1** for Members to consider and note. This will now be incorporated within the published Financial Statements for the year and posted on the Authority's website.

### **Value for Money Assessment**

5. Members may recall that this year there is a much more detailed and rigorous review of determining the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money. To enable Grant Thornton to make that assessment they have requested a significant amount of information over recent weeks, ranging from financial policies, information about approach to compliance issues and a variety of financial procedures. However, the letter at **Appendix 2**, expands on the fact that the National Audit Office has allowed auditors further time to conclude their work in this area and as such they have an additional three months from the conclusion of the audit to issue their Annual Report which will include commentary on their Value for Money assessment.
6. In summary, a somewhat different and more protracted year in terms of finalising the accounts and completing the value for money assessment, but it is pleasing to have been able to receive the Opinion on the accounts within the statutory deadline.

### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8. Members are requested to:
  - 8.1 Consider the External Auditor's Opinion of the accounts for the 2020/21 financial year (paragraph 3 and **Appendix 1** refer).
  - 8.2 Consider and note the remaining contents of the report.

## Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

### Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Kent and Medway Towns Fire and Rescue Authority (the 'Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2021, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, and the notes to the Statement of Accounts, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and include the firefighters' pension fund financial statements comprising the Fund Account and the Net Assets Statement. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2021 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law, as required by the Code of Audit Practice (2020) ("the Code of Audit Practice") approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

We are responsible for concluding on the appropriateness of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Authority to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services' conclusions, and in accordance with the expectation set out within the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 that the Authority's financial statements shall be prepared on a going concern basis, we considered the inherent risks associated with the continuation of services provided by the Authority. In doing so we had regard to the guidance provided in Practice Note 10 Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2020) on the application of ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern to public sector entities. We assessed the reasonableness of the basis of preparation used by the Authority and the Authority's disclosures over the going concern period.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Director of Finance and Corporate Services' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

The responsibilities of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services with respect to going concern are described in the 'Responsibilities of the Authority, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and Those Charged with Governance for the financial statements' section of this report.

### **Other information**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Annual Governance Statement and the information included in the Statement of Accounts other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of the other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Other information we are required to report on by exception under the Code of Audit Practice**

Under the Code of Audit Practice published by the National Audit Office in April 2020 on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (the Code of Audit Practice) we are required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with 'delivering good governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition' published by CIPFA and SOLACE or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit. We are not required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement addresses all risks and controls or that risks are satisfactorily addressed by internal controls.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Opinion on other matters required by the Code of Audit Practice**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit of the financial statements and our knowledge of the Authority, the other information published together with the financial statements in the Statement of Accounts for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or

- we make a written recommendation to the Authority under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or;
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matters.

### **Responsibilities of the Authority, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and Those Charged with Governance for the financial statements**

As explained in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts [set out on page 14], 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 of Finance and Corporate Services. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Director of Finance and Corporate Services determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention by government that the services provided by the Authority will no longer be provided.

The Authority is Those Charged with Governance. Those Charged with Governance are responsible for overseeing the Authority's financial reporting process.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### **Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material

misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that material misstatements in the financial statements may not be detected, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with the ISAs (UK).

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Authority and determined that the most significant, which are directly relevant to specific assertions in the financial statements, are those related to the reporting frameworks (international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Government Act 2003 and Pension Scheme (England) Order 2006. We also identified the following additional regulatory frameworks in respect of the firefighters/ police pension fund; the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014 and the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Order 2006.
- We enquired of senior officers and the Authority concerning the Authority's policies and procedures relating to:
  - the identification, evaluation and compliance with laws and regulations;
  - the detection and response to the risks of fraud; and
  - the establishment of internal controls to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- We enquired of senior officers and the Authority whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or whether they had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud.
- We assessed the susceptibility of the Authority's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur, by evaluating officers' incentives and opportunities for manipulation of the financial statements. This included the evaluation of the risk of management override of controls, fraudulent revenue recognition and fraudulent expenditure recognition.
- Our audit procedures involved:
  - evaluation of the design effectiveness of controls that the Director of Finance and Corporate Services has in place to prevent and detect fraud;
  - journal entry testing, with a focus on unusual journals made during the year and the accounts production stage for appropriateness and corroboration;
  - challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting estimates in respect of land and buildings and defined benefit pensions liability valuations; and
  - assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item.
- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. However, detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as those irregularities that result from fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it.

- Assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's:
  - understanding of, and practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity through appropriate training and participation
  - knowledge of the local government sector
  - understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the Authority including:
    - the provisions of the applicable legislation
    - guidance issued by CIPFA, LASAAC and SOLACE; and
    - the applicable statutory provisions.
- In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement, we obtained an understanding of:
  - the Authority's operations, including the nature of its income and expenditure and its services and of its objectives and strategies to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosures and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement.
  - the Authority's control environment, including the policies and procedures implemented by the Authority to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework.

#### **Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources**

##### **Matter on which we are required to report by exception – the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources**

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Our work on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources is not yet complete. The outcome of our work will be reported in our commentary on the Authority's arrangements in our Auditor's Annual Report. If we identify any significant weaknesses in these arrangements, these will be reported by exception in a further auditor's report. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on our opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

##### **Responsibilities of the Authority**

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

##### **Auditor's responsibilities for the review of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources**

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to be satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

We undertake our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in April 2021. This guidance sets out the arrangements that fall within the scope of 'proper arrangements'. When reporting on these arrangements, the Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

- Financial sustainability: how the Authority plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;
- Governance: how the Authority ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and
- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the Authority uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

We document our understanding of the arrangements the Authority has in place for each of these three specified reporting criteria, gathering sufficient evidence to support our risk assessment and commentary in our Auditor's Annual Report. In undertaking our work, we consider whether there is evidence to suggest that there are significant weaknesses in arrangements.

#### **Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – Delay in certification of completion of the audit**

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for the Kent and Medway Towns Fire and Rescue Authority for the year ended 31 March 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice until we have completed our work on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and issued our Auditor's Annual Report.

#### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Authority's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

John Paul Cuttle  
Key Audit Partner  
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor  
London  
30 September 2021



Mr N Chard  
Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Godlands  
Straw Mill Hill  
Maidstone  
ME15 6XB

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29 September 2021

Dear Nick

Under the 2020 Code of Audit Practice, for relevant authorities other than local NHS bodies we are required to issue our Auditor's Annual Report no later than 30 September or, where this is not possible, issue an audit letter setting out the reasons for delay.

As a result of the ongoing pandemic, and the impact it has had on both preparers and auditors of accounts to complete their work as quickly as would normally be expected, the National Audit Office has updated its guidance to auditors to allow us to postpone completion of our work on arrangements to secure value for money and focus our resources firstly on the delivery of our opinions on the financial statements. This is intended to help ensure as many as possible could be issued in line with national timetables and legislation.

As a result, we have therefore not yet issued our Auditor's Annual Report, including our commentary on arrangements to secure value for money. We now expect to publish our report no later than three months after the date of the audit opinion on the financial statements.

For the purposes of compliance with the 2020 Code, this letter constitutes the required audit letter explaining the reasons for delay.

Yours faithfully

Paul Cuttle

Director

For Grant Thornton UK LLP



By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority - 14 October 2021

Subject: SAFETY AND WELLBEING PLAN 2022

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

The Authority is required to produce a Safety and Wellbeing Plan (referred to as the Integrated or Community Risk Management Plan) which sets out the key changes to the way it provides services to the communities and businesses of Kent and Medway. This helps us create transparency in what we do and engage with our customers to design the services they need. This year's Plan again provides an update on performance, and focuses actions taken during the Coronavirus pandemic and the organisation's recovery, a revision to the day to day requirement for fire engines, and seeks views from the public in relation to the change in Council Tax next year.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the publication for consultation of the draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2022, subject to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, being authorised to make any minor amendments that may be necessary to the text of the Plan (paragraph 11 and **Appendix 1** refer).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Assistant Director, Corporate Services - James Finch  
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EMAIL: james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Background

1. The Government sets out its expectations of fire and rescue services in a document called the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework. The most recent version was published in 2018. Part of the framework deals with how fire and rescue services must complete and maintain a risk assessment of their local area and consult with the public and other relevant stakeholders on how it will seek to manage any risks it identifies. The mechanism for consultation is a document called an Integrated Risk Management Plan. Although the framework itself has not been amended, this name has now been amended by the sector to “Community Risk Management Plan”.
2. Several years ago, the Authority took the decision to move away from referring to this document as an Integrated Risk Management Plan, as this name was felt to be meaningless to the average member of the public. After a number of iterations, the name Safety and Wellbeing Plan was agreed in 2015. Whilst it is a legal requirement on fire and rescue services, for us, publishing a Safety and Wellbeing Plan is important as we want to be transparent to our customers and inform and engage them in service design for their needs.
3. This document is intended to inform customers about changes we intend to make, or would like customers’ views on, before we make them. Current activities, and our long-term risk assessment for Kent and Medway are covered in other documents, which are available on our website. The principal document is the Customer Safety Plan which Members considered and approved at the July 2021 meeting of the Authority. This looks to the future about the challenges we face, reports on projects and activities undertaken in the last year and summarises all our current strategies <<link>>. The other important document is our risk assessment for Kent. This is refreshed annually alongside the safety and wellbeing plan and is substantially refreshed periodically. Added together these three documents meet the Community Risk Management Planning Fire Services Standard published by the Fire Standards Board, and the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services (2018) to publish an integrated risk management plan.
4. Responses to the questionnaire which supports the Plan are collated electronically and analysed, to enable a full report to be presented to Members at the Budget meeting in February 2022.

### Summary of 2022 Plan

5. The draft update and questionnaire is attached at **Appendix 1**. The major issues covered are:

- What customers get for their money in the form of a visual performance update focused on actions during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic
  - The number of fire engines we require on a day-to-day basis to meet the foreseeable risk we have identified across Kent and Medway
  - Initial enquiries with customers around unreported fires in the home
  - Updates on changes to specialist equipment provision across Kent and Medway
  - Proposals on Council Tax options for 2021/22.
6. There are no proposals for any station closures, removal of fire engines, or compulsory redundancies of firefighters contained in the Plan. The Plan does update customers on ongoing issues with the availability of on-call fire engines, and this will need to be considered in detail in a future review of emergency response provision.
  7. Consultation on the Plan will run from 25 October 2020 to 14 January 2021. It is designed to be an accessible online publication. No printed copies of the Plan will be produced, but it will be possible to print copies on demand although the customer experience of using this route will be poorer. Experience from the last three Plans indicates there is very little, if any, demand for hard copies.
  8. Like previous Plans, the proposed questionnaire is embedded in **Appendix 1**, rather than being presented as a separate appendix. This more accurately reflects how the document will feel when being read online. Respondents are asked to comment on the issues raised in the Plan, and to select their preferred option in terms of changes in the Council Tax precept.
  9. Additional marketing will be performed compared to last year to drive greater engagement. It is however not anticipated that there will be significant media interest or a demand for interviews with officers or the Chair of the Authority. Officers will provide any briefings to external partners or Members of other authorities as requested. Social media and existing contacts held securely by the Authority with the consent of the data subject will be used to generate responses.
  10. The risk assessment published last year will be reviewed and republished.
  11. Members are requested to approve the Plan attached at **Appendix 1** for consultation with the public and key stakeholders.

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12. Limited personal data will be collected as part of this Plan from customers that respond. Experience in recent years has shown that response levels are such that any detailed analysis by protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 is

statistically meaningless. However by highlighting if any customer has not reported a small fire in the home, whilst at the same time stating that one or more protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, or another socio-economic factor, had a bearing on this decision, collecting data allows us to follow this up in more detail through primary research at a later date. This relies essentially on the consent of the data subject which they are able to withdraw at any time.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

13. Members are requested to:

13.1 Approve the publication for consultation of the draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2022, subject to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, being authorised to make any minor amendments that may be necessary to the text of the Plan (paragraph 11 and **Appendix 1** refer).

# Safety and Wellbeing Plan - 2022

## Together

Reading time approx. 20 minutes

## Chair's Introduction

Welcome to our Safety and Wellbeing Plan for 2022. The Plan focuses on what we continued to do during the COVID 19 pandemic to help customers all over Kent and Medway. We have also given a summary of what you receive as a customer, for the money you pay in your council tax to help run the fire and rescue service across Kent and Medway.

We would welcome your comments on a number of options regarding council tax levels for 2022/23.

I hope this update gives you useful information on how we plan to continue to keep you safe in Kent and Medway.

**Nick Chard**

**Chair – Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority**

### **Box 1: About this document**

The purpose of this document is to inform customers about changes we intend to make, or would like customers' views on, before we make them. Current activities, and our long-term risk assessment for Kent and Medway are covered in other documents, which are available on our website.

The principal document is the Customer Safety Plan <<link>> which looks to the future about the challenges we face, reports on projects and activities undertaken in the last year, and summarises all of our current strategies <<link>>.

The other important document is our risk assessment for Kent <<link>>. This is refreshed annually alongside the Safety and Wellbeing Plan and is substantially refreshed periodically.

Added together these three documents meet the Community Risk Management Planning Fire Services Standard <<link>> published by the Fire Standards Board, and the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services (2018) to publish an Integrated Risk Management Plan.

## **What do you get for your money**

- NB - To be delivered online as an infographic. Data is 2020/21.

## **There in times of need**

- Our 999 operators answered 33,685 emergency 999 calls
- 17,849 incidents were attended last year – in line with increased 999 demand in recent years
- We have specialist teams for a range of incidents including water, mud and cliff rescue, chemical incidents, animal rescue, explosions and terrorism

## **Incidents and activity**

- Thanks in part to the efforts of our customer safety teams, we attended just 545 house fires... but 42% of fires in the home still start in the kitchen
- Crews with specialist trauma care and rescue equipment went to 672 road crashes... and a vast range of other activities including grass fires, floods, industrial fires and severe weather events
- We went to 2,478 medical emergencies where our firefighters were closer than the nearest ambulance (which was mobilised at the same time)

## **Helping you stay safe**

- Last year we carried out 10,177 visits to homes of higher-risk people
- We provided online learning and fitness videos to school age children throughout the pandemic
- Our online social media content has been viewed 77.7 million times
- Our Covid-19 safety messaging reached approximately 14.1 million people
- 80,000 people saw our on-line safety open days on Facebook
- We supported the delivery of over 20,000 meals to the shielded older customers on behalf of Age UK
- We have continued to invest in our building safety team to help keep businesses and our customers safe
- We provided extensive support to the ambulance service and NHS vaccination centres through the pandemic

## What has changed since last year?

### Responding and adapting to Covid

The pandemic has continued to dominate the lives of all our customers and everyone that works for us. We have supported our partners across Kent and Medway meet the needs of their customers. For example we supported the ambulance service throughout the pandemic with firefighters seconded to support them in key areas like driving ambulances, training, responding to 999 calls on their behalf initially, and logistics. Working with Age UK we have delivered more than 20,000 meals.

We have recently trialled home safety open days in a face-to-face Covid secure environment. Our home safety and business safety services continued throughout the pandemic to help people and businesses stay safe.

We recognise that Covid will change the way customers live and work. We have completed a full organisational debrief of our response so we can learn lessons for future national emergencies and change the way we provide our services. As an example we are going to carry on working with Age UK to generate referrals between us both to increase access to services.

In 2020, we were inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services on how well we had responded to the pandemic. We received a very positive report and are proud of the contribution we made to keeping Kent and Medway safe during COVID-19.

### Our new Customer Safety Plan and strategies

In July 2021, we published a new Customer Safety Plan and six supporting strategies. They set out how we think Kent and Medway will change over the next ten years. We have also considered plans published by other organisations that look at issues like climate change, house building plans and population change as far forward as the next 20 years. Our strategies set out what our immediate plans are in response to some of those predicted changes. The Customer Safety Plan, and our strategies are published on our website and we always welcome any feedback on everything we publish.

**1. The Customer Safety Plan and our strategies are all available on our website. If you have any comments on them, please enter them in the box. We are especially keen to hear if you think:**

- we have missed anything you think we should have considered;
- there are additional changes you think are likely to happen in Kent and Medway we haven't considered;
- we have missed an action you would expect us to be taking.

Free text box

### Equality of access to our services

As a public service focused on excellence for our customers, we need to ensure equality of access to our services for every person in Kent and Medway and those in temporary residence or transit through Kent and Medway. We know through our incident data that some groups are more likely to have a fire. These groups include people who live with dementia, and those with mobility issues, or mental health issues. There are other groups



who are not necessarily showing in our data as being at higher risk from having a fire, but may not be accessing our services because of other barriers such as language, perceived prejudice and other societal factors.

Equality of access means actively seeking to engage everyone who may be unaware of our services, or chooses not to access them and those from other public sector providers.

We are committed to positively reaching customers who have unmet needs so we help them stay safe. We have published a number of equality of access cases, documenting our research into groups who we think could have difficulty or a reluctance to access our services. We have shared these with all fire and rescue services. We are now creating action plans to help all communities and customers access our services when they are needed in the way that helps them most.

## **This year's proposals**

### **Helping you in times of need – our approach to flexible resourcing**

We are always here, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, helping our customers in times of need. If you need to call 999, we will be there as quickly as possible. For example, on more than 70% of occasions last year, we had a crew of firefighters with a customer within 10 minutes of leaving the fire station following a 999 call. We successfully dealt with all incidents we attended, with highly trained firefighters who understood the needs of our customers. We constantly monitor the quality of the service we give customers and invite other agencies to assess our customer service, such as the Institute of Customer Service.

We have trained and available firefighters in locations spread around Kent and Medway, with the right skills, training, and equipment to help you when we arrive. This includes on-call fire fighters, who live or work close to fire stations, providing important services in their local communities.

We train every day to deal with the types of incident we might expect to attend most frequently, as well as for more complex incidents which need a number of fire engines and specialist equipment and specially trained firefighters to deal with.

We have an operating model of how many fire engines we need day to day to meet what is reasonably likely to happen across Kent and Medway. Currently this maximum number is 50. This doesn't mean we need every fire engine we have available to us on duty all the time. Using your money wisely means we balance and flex our resources up and down, and have for many years.

### **How it works.**

Most days we have between 32 and 44 fire engines available at any one time. We have 26 fire engines immediately available, during the day, every day<sup>1</sup>. The remainder we need come from a number of on-call fire engines. These are mostly based in more rural areas of Kent and Medway.

On occasions we will have a surge in demand, with incidents like flooding, large fires in complex buildings, or field fires. These need a lot of our resources while that incident is dealt

<sup>1</sup> At night, this drops to 15, as 9 fire stations use the day-crewing duty system where firefighters respond from home overnight, adding around five minutes to our attendance time as they travel to the fire station.

with, and we will bring back into service more fire engines as experience has shown we can quickly get additional fire engines available to us if we need to, using an approach called recall to duty. This is why we aim for 50 fire engines overall so we have enough additional skilled people who can be called to the incident, once the initial response has been made. Over the past five years we have used this second line of response many times and always resourced the incident.

With this ability to bring more in should we need to, it's a more efficient way of providing our response to our customers and makes the best use of the funding you, our customers, give us via the Council Tax.

### **How we ensure we have resources when we need them**

Minute by minute monitoring of all our resources is done by our 999 call handling team who move fire engines and firefighters around Kent and Medway all the time to meet current customer need. The science and professional judgement based on the layered experience of our 999 call handling team underneath those decisions is explained here.

Informing how many fire engines we have available at any one time is based on defined factors, shown in **Box 2**, which we have reviewed for this Plan.

#### **Box 2: Our planning assumptions**

- We keep striving to know as much as possible about the **customers** we serve, and the communities they live in. This is also part of our equality of access work as we look at the very different needs people have.
- We look at our data on incidents we have attended in the past (historic **demand**)
- We will look constantly at what is happening in real time across Kent and Medway to see if our resources are being stretched (current **demand**).
- We want the first fire engine to arrive at all incidents as quickly as possible at all times of day and night. This supports our approach to flexible resourcing as when the first firefighters arrive, they will quickly judge what other resources are needed and work with our 999 call handling team to get the right number of fire engines and specialist resources on the way to you.
- At incidents that need more than one fire engine, we want the time difference between the first and second fire engines arriving to be as small as possible.
- We want to always be prepared for a significant number of small incidents spread across Kent and Medway, involving one or two fire engines.

All our data since 2015 suggests a large number of small incidents is the main threat to the availability of fire engines for further incidents, and how quickly we can therefore respond. We used to plan for two significant incidents occurring at the same time in different parts of Kent and Medway. By “significant” we mean an incident which requires between six to ten fire engines to resolve it. In reality although we have significant incidents, it is unusual for two of them to occur at the same time.

2. When planning how we meet our day to day need for fire engines, to what extent do you agree that our planning assumptions shown in Box 2 are correct? Please indicate by selecting the option below which most reflects your view

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

3. If you think there are other factors we should consider within our planning assumptions shown in Box 2 for how we meet our day to day need for fire engines, please enter them here

Free text box

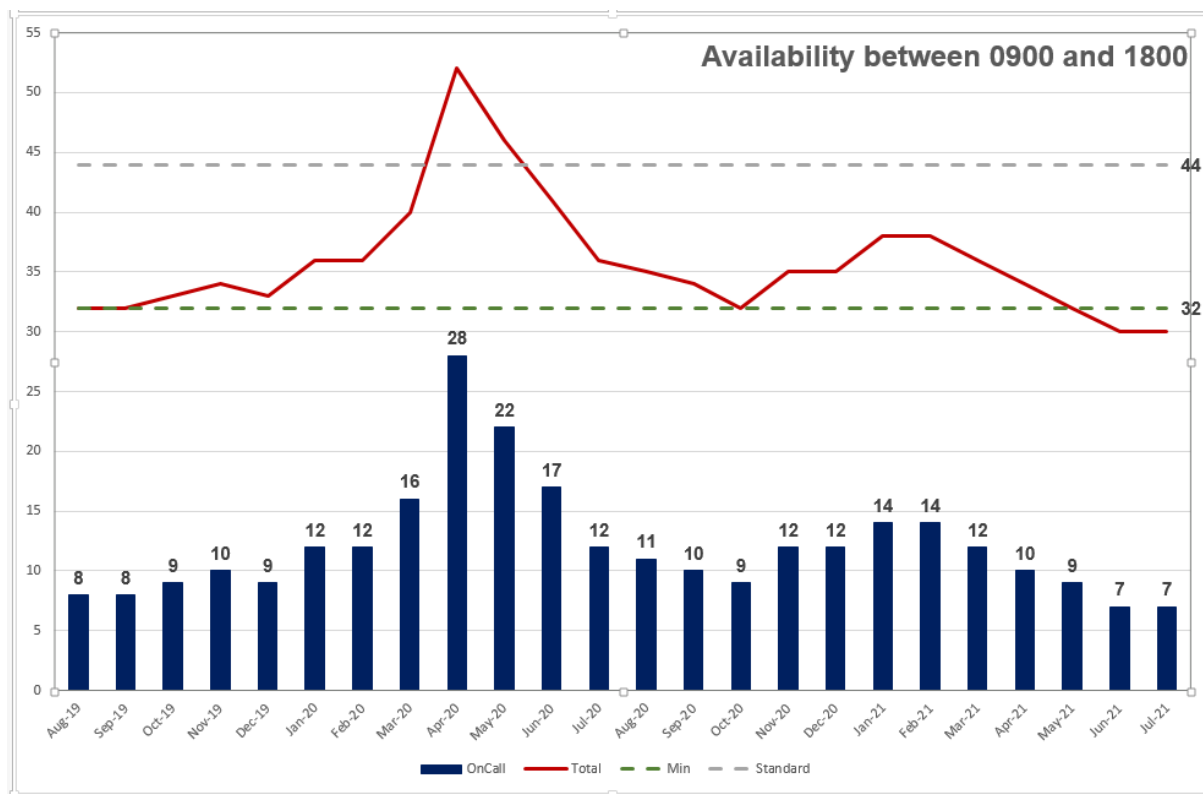
### **Better availability of on-call fire engines would help us**

We rely on on-call firefighters to give us the total number of fire engines we want for our flexible resourcing model. They are a critical part of the team keeping our customers safe.

Over the last few years it has become much harder to get on-call fire engines at all times of day and night. This is because people tend to commute for work each day, and it seems to be becoming harder for employers to release people to be on-call firefighters when they are at work. We have made some changes, such as accepting applications from people that live slightly further away from the fire station than we would usually like. We recognise employers that release their staff to be on-call firefighters at our annual awards ceremony. And on-call fire engines have provided an important resource for longer incidents when those firefighters that initially respond need to be refreshed with new firefighters. We have also run concerted recruitment campaigns for on-call firefighters across Kent and Medway.

During the early stages of the pandemic, when many workers were furloughed, we saw the availability of on-call fire engines increase significantly, as shown in the spike in **Graph 1**. But this has now returned to what has become more standard levels of between six to 10 on-call fire engines being available to deploy at any given time, and sometimes fewer than that, especially during the day and at weekends. This gives us a gap at times between what we would like, and what we can currently achieve.

**Graph 1: current and historic total availability of fire engines**



We will now look at all the further options we can to improve the availability of on-call fire engines. For example we have recently agreed that we will cover loss of earnings whilst people are training to become on-call firefighters with us, or training to take on specialist roles like driving. We will continue to look at how we can recruit more on-call firefighters to increase our coverage, and better support them once recruited. We will look again at our expectations of on-call firefighters, and whether we expect too much from them in terms of a time commitment for training. And we will look at making systems more accessible to everyone that works for us, using their own mobile phones and tablet devices so they can, for example, access training at times that works for them.

We will do a large review of fire cover, which we do periodically, called a review of emergency response. This will look at a range of options. Due to the pandemic, we have decided to defer starting this work until October 2022 so we can assess how the pandemic has impacted people's working lives.

## Have you called us?

We have some evidence from Government statistics and our own discussions with customers that some people don't consider ringing the fire and rescue service if they have a fire at home. Nationally, fire and rescue services attend around 40,000 fires each year in people's homes and this has been relatively static for a number of years. The English Housing Survey also collects data about the number of people that have had a fire of any kind in the home, and this records around 100,000 households that had a fire of some kind the previous year. This suggests a large number of small fires in the home which are not reported to us. And we would like to understand this more.

We are not suggesting that there is a large number of big house fires in Kent and Medway we didn't attend. Nor are we saying that there are fatalities or casualties from house fires we

didn't get called to. But what it does suggest is that there is a proportion of incidents which occur where customers may, for whatever reason, been reluctant to call us. In addition, experiencing even a small fire may have a big impact on a customer's feelings of safety, security, and wellbeing, and amongst customers at high-risk, their ability to remain in their home. We currently have no method to get support to these customers, unless a further, bigger incident occurs or another agency refers the customer. What was a near miss and a chance to support the customer then could become a more significant fire, potentially with catastrophic consequences.

In future, we would like anyone that has a fire, no matter how small, to contact us so we can help customers with future fire prevention. We would like to treat these unreported fires as near misses and support those customers as much as we would someone that has called 999.

**4. Have you ever had a small fire\* in your home but not dialled 999 and asked for the help of Kent Fire and Rescue Service? (\*a fire in this case is defined as visible flames and/or smoke).**

Yes. I had a small fire in my home. I (or other people in my home) did not call 999.

No.

Don't remember/don't know

**5. If you answered 'Yes' to the above, then what were your reasons for not dialling 999 and asking for our help?**

Free text box

**6. Would any of the following characteristics apply to you today? There is no requirement to answer this question, and the data will be deleted as soon this consultation closes and the data analysed.**

I identify as a member of the LGBTIQ+ community

I identify as a member of an ethnic minority

I live with a disability

I live in rented accommodation

I have recently arrived and settled in the United Kingdom

Any other factor you would like to tell us about?

Free text box

7. If you answered 'Yes' to question xx [NB: question numbering will automatically change based on customer responses], in what ways could we ensure that our staff gain positive experience and understanding of these aspects?

Free text box

8. Would you be happy for us to contact you early in 2022 to discuss your responses to the questions above?

Yes – I am happy for you to keep my contact details securely and understand we will not share them with any other organisation

No – I am not happy for you to contact me. I understand my data will be deleted once analysis is complete.

## Protecting the built environment

The tragic fire at Grenfell Tower highlighted the need for major improvements to the built environment. Making buildings safer for all our customers is core to our role and our vision. We believe that by working in partnership, we can help create a safer built environment, which will reduce the number of fires and help keep our customers safe.

Since Grenfell, we have developed a new approach to Building Safety, which has led to significant increases in the number of buildings we audit on an annual basis. Over the past few years, we have made a significant investment in our Building Safety teams, recruited more staff and are on course to meet the National Fire Chief Councils' competency framework for Protection.

We have also introduced a new risk based inspection programme, which ensures the work of our fire risk inspection team is focussed on buildings which are more likely to have a fire.

As the fire safety regulator for Kent and Medway we are aiming to 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 all our customers safer. Where we need to keep our customers safe, we will use our enforcement powers under the Fire Safety Order 2005, in a proportionate way.

## Capability changes

**Boats:** We operate a range of rescue boats designed to work on inland waters. Rescues from the sea are undertaken by our colleagues in the Coastguard and the RNLI. We have completed a review of the boats we have, and as a result have decided to move the large powered boat currently located at Folkestone fire station to Sheppey as it is better suited to the types of incidents it is used at, if based there. We hope it will be located on the waterfront and not at the fire station, freeing space there to improve the day to day working experience for Sheppey firefighters.

Folkestone will receive a smaller inflatable boat, but the small boat based at Tonbridge will be removed.

We have been gifted two powered inflatable boats by the ambulance service's specialist rescue team. We will be working with the ambulance service to establish a joint fire and ambulance rescue team, able to respond to the most challenging water rescue incidents. We will be locating a powered boat in the Strood area, permanently moored in the river, to respond more quickly to the large number of rescues we are called to on this part of the river Medway.

**Hose layers and pumps:** We have reviewed how we get large amounts of water to an incident, using a vehicle called a hose layer, and how we remove large amounts of water, using large water pumps. As a result we intend to remove our least used hose layer, based at Faversham as whilst it is important we maintain this capability, there is not enough demand to require two hose layers. This will leave us with one hose layer at Tunbridge Wells, along with a high volume pump based at Whitstable. This saves us c£250k but will still enable us to meet the likely risk from flooding and pumping water for firefighting at incidents.

**Fire engines:** We have three types of fire engines. At full-time fire stations, at least one of the fire engines based there is a "heavy rescue" fire engine which means it carries cutting gear to deal with road traffic collisions. We will be combining the capabilities of our heavy rescue and standard rescue fire engines, utilising the latest equipment technology, to deliver new appliances that are capable of attending a wider range of rescue incidents. It means we can move our fleet to cover Kent and Medway more effectively and standardises the training we have to provide to full-time firefighters.

**Lighter and smaller equipment for firefighters:** We are investing in equipment which is lighter, has improved battery technology, and is better for the environment and for firefighters than petrol powered machinery such as standard cutting equipment.

## **Changing our estate**

We are starting the process of planning to redevelop our live fire training facility at Ashford. This will provide a state of the art facility for trainees and existing firefighters to practice the skills of firefighting in buildings in realistic scenarios and temperatures.

Elsewhere, if it is commercially viable, we would like to modernise and redevelop our existing site at Maidstone which houses our fire station, distribution centre, our urban search and rescue team and our training centre. Most of the buildings on this site date from the 1970s and so are in need of redevelopment. Added to this is the fact that grouping all of these functions together in inadequate and out-of-date buildings does not represent the most effective way of utilising them. As a result, our plan is to move the training centre, distribution centre and urban search and rescue centre to other, more modern and suitable parts of our estate. This is because our fire stations are more than just buildings, they play as important a role in our ability to provide an effective fire and rescue service as the equipment and vehicles that we use. And, just like all of our equipment and vehicles, it's key that we ensure our buildings are kept up-to-date and fit for purpose. There is more detail on why we want to do this in the assets and environment strategy which is available on our website.

We also plan to make more use of home working and hybrid working and therefore will need less office space in future.

## **Changes to how we deliver road safety education**

With the changes caused by the pandemic we have reviewed how we deliver road safety education to school age and college age children. Whilst a road safety centre, currently part

of Rochester fire station, made good business sense as a concept, feedback from schools, alongside changes to the national curriculum, means that it is better if we go to them, rather than bringing their students to Rochester fire station. We will occasionally put on productions like 'no turning back', though we will hire venues or visit schools across Kent and Medway for this.

This means we can repurpose part of Rochester fire station into a different use. We will look at keeping some education facilities at Rochester as part of these changes.

## Setting the Council Tax

1. **The average Band D property pays just over £1.55 per week in council tax (£80.82 per year) to help run Kent Fire and Rescue Service - do you think this provides good value?** on a scale of 1-5 (5 Good value and 1 being not good value) \*\*LINK or footnote to say band D Property

2. **We welcome your views on the following council tax options for 2022/23 and ask which one you would prefer:**

Option 1: Freeze council tax for a year

Option 2: Increase council tax by an amount just under the currently proposed referendum limit of 2%, which is an increase of just under 3p a week for an average band D household

Option 3: If there is flexibility to do so, would you agree to an increase of up to £5 per year (just under 10p per week) for an average band D household.

*(The National Fire Chiefs' Council represents all fire and rescue services to the government. Option 3 is based on a request to the government to allow fire and rescue services more flexibility next year by enabling them to increase council tax up to a maximum of £5 per year on a Band D property. If we were able to do so it will help meet the cost of additional financial pressures in future years and ensure that we continue to provide the highest level of life-saving service).*

3. **Free text box: If you have any comments on the council tax options for 2022/23 please enter them here.**

4. **Free text box: If you have any other comments on any other element of this Plan, please enter them here.**



## Glossary

Activity	The incidents attended by each individual fire engine in the local area or elsewhere.
Call	A request for assistance by the public or any other body or agency made to the fire and rescue service.
Capital budget	The money spent on buying big physical things, like fire engines, buildings, or our IT systems.
Co-responding	An agreement with the ambulance service to send specially trained on-call firefighters to provide initial emergency medical care in the event of e.g. someone suffering a heart attack in their home. An ambulance is also always sent. Also known as responding to medical emergencies
County	The whole geographical area known as Kent. This includes the area where local services are provided by Medway Council as well as Kent County Council.
Customer	Anyone that uses our services or contributes to their provision via council tax
Day-crewed duty system	See whole-time day-crewed duty system.
Demand	The number of incidents that happen in a defined area over a defined period of time.
Incident	Any call to which the Service sends a response. As a lot of people may call us about the same incident, this number is always lower than the number of calls we receive.
Isolation	The distance of a place or community, measured in travel time, from the nearest fire engine when it's at the fire station and ready to respond.
Medical emergency	A term covering calls made to the ambulance service to which they respond as an emergency. Calls are graded, with Red 1 calls being the most urgent priority (eg stroke, breathing stopped, cardiac arrest), and Red 2 being less urgent but still priority.
Mobilisation	Every occasion when a fire engine or special appliance is sent to an emergency. Individual incidents may require just one or several mobilisations to resource it properly.
On-call duty system	A duty system where firefighters respond from their own homes or workplaces located near to the fire station on an on-call basis.
On-call fire station	A fire station crewed entirely by firefighters working the on-call duty system.
Referendum	A general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision.
Revenue budget	This is the day-to-day budget used to run the service provided by firefighters and other staff across the county.
Risk	The combination of factors that adds up to the likelihood of an incident in an area.
Simultaneous demand	Occasions when more than one incident is happening at the same time in the same area – for instance in the whole of Kent and Medway, or just in the same town.
Whole-time shift duty system	A duty system under which firefighters are available on the fire station 24/7.
Whole-time day-crewed duty system	A duty system under which firefighters are available at the fire station during the day, and are called out from their nearby homes at other times.

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By: Clerk to the Authority

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 14 October 2021

Subject: MEMBER ALLOWANCES AND ANNUAL REPORT ON  
MEMBER STANDARDS 2020/21

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

This report is seeking Members' agreement to the Authority's Independent Person, Jenny Waterman, undertaking the next review of the Member Allowances Scheme and that the outcomes of that review are reported to the next meeting of the Authority in February 2022. The report also contains information on Members' Standards as well as details of the allowances and expenses paid to Members by the Authority during the 2020/21 financial year.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Agree to the Authority's Independent Person being selected to undertake the review of the Member Allowances Scheme and the outcome of that review being reported at the meeting in February 2022 (paragraphs 1 and 2 refers).
2. Consider and note the annual report on standards (paragraphs 3 to 7 refer).
3. Consider and note the contents of the schedule detailing the allowances and expenses paid by the Authority in accordance with its Members' Allowances Scheme to each Member during 2020/21 (paragraph 8 and **Appendix 1** refers).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Clerk to the Authority – Marie Curry  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 Ext 8291  
EMAIL: [marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org)  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Background

1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires authorities to review their Schemes at least once every four years. The last review of the Authority's Scheme took place in 2017 and was undertaken by the Independent Person (IP) in post at the time. It is therefore requested that in the interests of public accountability and transparency, Members agree to the same process of using the Authority's current IP, Jenny Waterman, as the independent adviser to undertake the next review of the Authority's Member Allowances Scheme.
2. As the regulations require the Authority to have regard to the recommendations made to Kent County Council (KCC) and Medway Council by their respective Independent Remuneration Panels (IRP), it is understood that the meeting of KCC's IRP has been postponed until later this year. As a result of this and to allow the IP sufficient time to review any recommendations from this Panel, Members' agreement is sought for the completion and outcomes of this Authority's Member Allowances Review to be reported at its meeting in February 2022.

### Annual Report on Standards

3. Under the Localism Act 2011, the Authority is required to have an Independent Person to investigate any complaint that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct. As part of the Act all local authorities must also promote and maintain high standards of conduct by their Members. In order to achieve this, the Authority receives an annual report on any standards matters and as such it is pleasing to note that no complaints alleging that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct have been made to the Authority during the past year. The Authority's IP has contributed to the report and as such will be in attendance at the meeting to present this outcome.
4. **Code of Conduct for Members** – Together with almost all other local authorities in Kent (including KCC but not Medway Council) the Authority adopted the Kent Code of Conduct for Members and the associated procedures (the 'Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints'). As a result, the Authority's Code of Conduct and associated procedures are identical in all major respects to those of KCC.
5. The Code, and the associated procedures, are kept under regular review by a Kent-wide officer group, which makes recommendations for change to all the relevant authorities.
6. Given that the Authority has never in its history received a single allegation of misconduct by a Member, it was always expected that the formal workload of the IP in relation to this issue was likely to be minimal.
7. Since Jenny's appointment to the IP role, she has been in regular contact with the Clerk to the Authority as well as undertaking a formal induction session tailored for the IP role which was held back in August. In addition to the proposal contained within this report

of the IP undertaking the Authority's review of its Member Allowances Scheme, the IP will also be required to attend this meeting each year; have received electronic agendas for all meetings of the Authority and its Committees; and maintained regular contact with the Authority about topical Standards issues.

### **Allowances and Expenses Paid to Members During 2020/21**

8. In order to meet the publication requirements of the 2003 Regulations, a schedule is attached at **Appendix 1** listing each Member and the allowances and expenses they were paid by the Authority in accordance with its Members' Allowances Scheme during the 2020/21 financial year (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021).

### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9. The Authority is required by law to review its Members' Allowances Scheme at least once every four years and in the interests of transparency, should be undertaken by an independent person.
10. The Localism Act places a duty on the Authority to promote and maintain high standards of conduct, and the purpose of this report is to assist the Authority to fulfil this duty. It is a legal requirement that the Authority publishes each year details of the allowances and expenses which it has paid to each of its Members during the preceding year, and **Appendix 1** to the report is the vehicle for doing that.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11. Members are requested to:
  - 11.1 Agree to the Authority's Independent Person being selected to undertake the review of the Member Allowances Scheme and the outcome of that review being reported at the meeting in February 2022 (paragraphs 1 and 2 refer);
  - 11.2 Consider and note the annual report on standards (paragraphs 3 to 7 refer).
  - 11.3 Consider and note the contents of the schedule detailing the allowances and expenses paid by the Authority in accordance with its Members' Allowances Scheme to each Member during 2020/21 (paragraph 8 and **Appendix 1** refers).

**Members' Allowances and Travel Expenses**  
**1 April 2020 – March 2021**

KMFRA MEMBER			TRAVEL (Gross)	BASIC ALLOWANCE (Gross)	SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE (Gross)	TOTAL RECEIVED
MRS	A	ALLEN (from Sept 2020)	-	£1,019.95	-	£1,019.95
MR	M	ANGELL	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	A	BOOTH	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	D	BRAZIER	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	N	CHARD	-	£1,511.64	£19,823.88	£21,335.52
MR	I	CHITTENDEN	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	N	COLLOR	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	A	COOK	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	D	DALEY	-	£1,511.64	£5,947.17	£7,458.81
MISS	E	DAWSON	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	D	FARRELL (from June 2020)	-	£1,511.64	£2,599.83	£4,111.47
MR	P	HARMAN	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64

KMFRA MEMBER			MILEAGE (Gross)	BASIC ALLOWANCE (Gross)	SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE (Gross)	TOTAL RECEIVED
MRS	S	HOHLER	£51.75	£1,511.64	-	£1,603.39
MR	B	KEMP	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	P	LAKE	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	G	LYMER	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	S	MANION	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	V	MAPLE	-	£1,511.64	£2,973.60	£4485.24
MS	D	MARSH	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	J	MCINROY	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	A	RIDGERS	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	C	SIMKINS	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MRS	P	STOCKELL (up to Aug 2020)	-	£482.49	-	£482.29
DR	L	SULLIVAN (up to end of April 2020)	-	£122.60	£241.17	£363.77
MR	B	SWEETLAND	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	R	THORNE	-	£1,511.64	-	£1,511.64
MR	S	TRANTER	-	£1511.64	£7,929.57	£9,441.21
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>£51.75</b>	<b>£37,944.20</b>	<b>£39,515.22</b>	<b>£77511.17</b>

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By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 14 October 2021

Subject: PROPOSED CALENDAR OF MEMBER MEETINGS AND OTHER  
EVENTS FOR 2022/23

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

This report sets out for Members' consideration and approval, the proposed Calendar of Member Meetings and Other Events for 2022/23.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the proposed Calendar of Member Meetings for 2022/23 as set out in **Appendix 1** (paragraphs 2 and 3 refers).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Clerk to the Authority – Marie Curry  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 Ext 8291  
EMAIL: [marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org)  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Introduction

1. It is the Authority's normal practice at the end of each calendar year to approve the programme of Member meetings for the forthcoming municipal year (June to June).

### Member Meetings for the Remainder of 2021/22 Calendar Year

2. In December 2020, the Authority set and agreed the dates for its meetings for the remainder of the current Authority year (through to the Annual Meeting in June 2022). Members will recall that since the last report there has been the introduction of an Audit and Governance Committee. It is the intention that this Committee will meet at least three times a year to tie in with key financial timescales, with the first meeting taking place in November this year. Members are required to note the changes to the existing calendar of dates which are identified in Part 1 of **Appendix 1**.

### Proposed Meeting Dates for 2022/23

3. Suggested dates for the proposed Authority and Audit and Governance Committee meetings from June 2022 until June 2023 are shown in the second part of **Appendix 1** for Members' consideration and approval.
4. All currently known dates which have an influence on the meetings programme (such as local elections, LGA Conferences, and annual meetings of the constituent authorities) are also shown.
5. The suggested dates for 2022/23 follow a similar pattern to that adopted for 2021/22, avoiding school holiday periods as far as reasonably possible.
6. As usual, in drawing up the proposed calendar of meetings, discussions have taken place with relevant officers at both Kent County Council (KCC) and Medway Council to try to avoid any significant date clashes. As it is often necessary for the constituent Councils to call meetings at short notice, it is inevitable that clashes will occur from time to time, despite the best efforts of all parties.

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7. All costs associated with the meetings are contained within existing budgetary provisions.

## RECOMMENDATION

8. Members are requested to:
  - 8.1 Approve the proposed Calendar of Member Meetings for 2022/23 as set out in **Appendix 1** (paragraphs 2 and 3 refers).

## PROPOSED CALENDAR OF MEMBER MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS 2022/23

### Part 1: Remainder of 2021/22 - Previously Approved

#### \* Changes made to the existing calendar

#### 2021

KMFRA	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> October at 10.30am
*Audit & Governance	Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> November at 10.30am
*KMFRA	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> December <b>(please remove this date from your diaries)</b>

#### 2022

KMFRA Budget	Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> February at 10.30am
<i>LGA Annual Fire Conference</i>	<i>March 2022 TBC</i>
*Audit & Governance	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> April at 10.30am <b>(the previous KMFRA date)</b>
KMFRA AGM	Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> June at 10.30am
<i>LGA General Assembly and Annual Conference</i>	<i>Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June to Thursday 30 June 2022</i>

### Part 2: Proposed Dates – for Approval

Audit & Governance	Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September at 10.30am
KMFRA	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> October at 10.30am
Audit & Governance	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> December at 10.30am

#### 2023

KMFRA Budget	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> February at 10.30am
<i>LGA Annual Fire Conference</i>	<i>TBC</i>
Audit & Governance	Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> April at 10.30am
<i>Medway Council Elections</i>	<i>Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May</i>
KMFRA AGM	Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> June at 10.30am

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By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 14 October 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 - 7 refers);
- C.** Performance Update (paragraphs 8 - 9 and **Appendix 1** refers);
- D.** Operational Update (paragraphs 10 - 15 refer);
- E.** Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update (paragraphs 16 – 43 refer);
- F.** Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme update (paragraphs 44 - 54 refer);
- G.** Transparency in Supply Chains Statement (paragraph 55 and **Appendix 2** refer);
- H.** Pensions Board Update (paragraph 56 and **Appendix 3** 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](mailto:james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org)*

1. At the time of writing, 48.3m adults and vulnerable children have received one Covid-19 vaccination and 43.6m have had two doses. At national level, there continues to be discussion about vaccination of 15 year olds and younger. As there is a lag in the data, the impact of schools reopening after the summer holidays is not yet fully reflected in the national statistics but there is a risk of a further rise in infection rates, and rumours of a further short lockdown around the October school half term. We are sadly beginning to see the fatality figures increase, but at nothing like the levels experienced early in 2021. With our partners in Kent and Medway we are keeping a close eye on infection levels across the area.
2. Impacts on our own service delivery have been seen, more so than we have experienced previously, as a higher proportion of staff are reporting either a positive diagnosis of Covid-19 or self-isolating as a result of exposure. There is further information on this in **Appendix 1** to this report.
3. Within our own buildings we continue to ask everyone that works for us to take sensible precautions like avoiding gathering in confined spaces and wearing masks when inside unless sat at a desk. Our headquarters site is now reopened and is seeing a gradual increase in usage as those based there trial a more hybridised mix of home working and office based working.
4. We continue to produce and share Covid messages under the #kenttogether banner to encourage the safety of all our customers.

#### 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](mailto:james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org)*

5. **National issues:** Members will recall that the Secretary of State for Fire announced in March 2021 that their department would bring forward a white paper in the summer to outline the Home Office's programme of legislative reform for the sector. At the time of writing, it remains yet to be published. Whilst the detail of the proposals contained in a white paper could be wide-ranging, they are unknown at this time. Regardless the Authority is likely to want to formulate a response and discuss it with the Chair of the Authority and political group leaders prior to submission. Any response made will be reported to a future meeting of the Authority.
6. **Officers of the Inspectorate:** Members will be aware that the existing inspector for fire and rescue services, Zoe Billingham retired from her role in September. Following a

recruitment process, she will be replaced by Roy Wilshire, the former chief of the National Fire Chiefs' Council. As an organisation we have offered Roy our congratulations.

7. Members may also be aware that the Chief Inspector of Police Forces and Fire and Rescue Services Sir Tom Winsor will also retire soon. No announcement on his successor has yet been made. One of his last roles for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services will be to issue his final State of Fire annual report, which is due in the new year.

#### **C. Performance Update**

*Lead/Contact Officer: James Finch, Assistant Director, Corporate Services*  
01622 692121 ext 8453, [james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org)

8. **Performance:** The performance update is available in **Appendix 1**. This update provides Members with an overview of the Authority's performance between April and August 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 five months into the financial year and at the beginning of a new medium term reporting period.
9. **Management of contaminants update:** The Authority will shortly be launching a project to further improve our arrangements with regards to the management of contaminants. Reducing the exposure of our colleagues to contaminants from incidents is of huge importance to us when it comes to ensuring their safety and wellbeing. We are already in a good position when it comes to this important work, as we ran our first project on this in 2015. This resulted in us influencing and producing many of the improvements that have been delivered nationally. This has involved working with leading academic institutions across the UK. Improvements have included a move toward carrying breathing apparatus sets in lockers instead of within fire engines, and the introduction of new respirators. The Fire Brigades' Union, along with the University of Central Lancashire, has recently published a study into the effects of contaminants and how they can be managed. The project we are about to start will explore these recommendations and address any areas for improvement.

#### **D. Operational Update**

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

#### **Recent Incidents of Interest**

10. There have been a number of significant recent incidents which are brought to Members' attention.
11. **Bar and Restaurant Fire, Maidstone – initial call to automatic fire alarm sounding 02:36 14/07/2021:** In the early hours of Wednesday morning, two fire engines were deployed to Week Street to investigate an automatic fire alarm sounding at a large

entertainment venue. The premises was heavily smoke logged, and firefighters entered the building to locate the fire. The complexity of the building layout hampered efforts to contain and extinguish the fire, which subsequently spread to the entire building from the identified room of origin – a utility cupboard. At the height of the incident 15 fire engines, a height vehicle and a command support unit were in attendance along with six officers and our technical rescue team. We had firefighters in attendance until just after 18:00 when we closed the incident down and made three revisits overnight with a single fire engine to check for hotspots. Considerable effort was made by the Authority to minimise the impact of the firefighting operations on the surrounding area. In addition to the firefighting operations, a team were deployed to the incident to carry out a business safety and customer liaison role. The team were in attendance by mid-morning and consisted of staff from Business Safety, Customer Safety and our Community Volunteers. They worked alongside colleagues in Kent County Council Emergency Planning to provide advice and reassurance to local residents and businesses. The team at Kent County Council set up a community hotline and advertised it in the area through social media and posters (for those who do not use social media) that enabled people and businesses affected to phone up and be triaged so they could then be put in touch with the right services that they needed to get support from.

12. **Wide area flooding, Bethersden – initial call 15:20 25/07/2021:** Unusually high summer rainfall caused flash flooding in several areas, with Bethersden particularly badly affected. Surface water from local roads and nearby fields inundated numerous properties in the Bailey Field/A28 area, and the Authority responded with six fire engines and the high volume pump to move water away towards the River Beult, this being achieved by 08:00 the following morning. The Volunteer Response Team also attended to provide support to affected residents and businesses.
13. **Tanker fire, A21 Lamberhurst – initial call 11:44 11/08/2021:** A call to a petrol tanker lorry with a fire in the gear box was received. The pre-determined attendance of two fire engines, a bulk water carrier and a foam unit were sent to the A21. On arrival the tanker was fully involved in fire and a request for an additional four fire engines was made. The tanker was carrying 39,000 litres of petrol and diesel. Due to the nature of the incident it was necessary to close the A21 in both directions for some considerable time leading to inevitable traffic congestion in the surrounding area. Due to the proximity of the fire to the River Teise, in consultation with the Environment Agency, it was determined that a foam strike would potentially contaminate the water course and therefore the tactic was to let the fire extinguish itself under controlled conditions. The incident was brought to end just after 18:00.
14. **House fire, Maidstone – initial call 18:40 14/09/2021:** Multiple calls were received to smoke issuing from a domestic property. The first crews arrived within three minutes and found a fully developed fire on the ground floor of the property where persons were reported to be inside the building. A breathing apparatus team entered the ground floor and rescued one person from the living room who was suffering from severe burns. The fire was brought under control within the hour. The Authority's Fire Investigation team



attended to support the Police with discovering the cause, which at this time is believed to have been accidental. Sadly we were informed that the casualty, a female aged 74 years old, passed away the next day. The cause of death will be confirmed by the coroner is due course.

15. **Fire in converter station, Sellindge – initial call 00:32 15/09/2021:** The Authority was called to the Sellindge converter station, which is a level four priority risk site under our operational risk planning process and is also critical national infrastructure, to a report of a fire in one of the buildings. The fire was well developed on arrival in an H shaped building 100m x 40m over three floors which contains the electrical infrastructure receiving power from France. Thankfully the part of the site providing power directly to the national grid was unaffected. Twelve fire engines were requested to resolve the incident which then scaled down throughout the day until operations were complete at 21:30. A further visit was carried out the next day and responsibility was handed back to National Grid. It was not possible to save the building where the fire originated which involved infrastructure with an estimated value of £1 billion.

**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](mailto:jon.quinn@kent.fire-uk.org)*

16. 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**

17. **Dynamics risk management system:** The Building Safety Team has been busy with the testing and implementation of the Dynamics risk management system which went live on 2 August 2021. The new system has been very positively received by the team. The system embeds day-to-day working practices and mobile working capability, which will allow inspecting officers to improve efficiency by complete paperwork onsite whilst undertaking an audit on a mobile device. Previously, such work was completed back in the office. We anticipate all Building Safety colleague will be using the new system routinely by mid-September, and the benefits of the system becoming more visible by the end of the financial year.
18. **Fire Engineering:** As part of the Fire Engineering team restructure earlier in the year, two new Fire Engineering Technicians have joined the Building Safety department. They both have backgrounds in fire engineering, including the use of Computational Fluid Dynamics which is a great addition to the team. This capability provides the Authority with the ability to deal with the most complex issues, putting us in a good place to meet the challenges of the Building Safety Bill.
19. **Building Risk Review:** The Building Risk Review into tall residential buildings has been completed successfully. The work was completed at the end of September, three months ahead of the deadline set by the government. The Building Safety team

has inspected more than 195 buildings which contain flats, including the external wall systems.

### **Customer Experience and Behaviour Change Update**

20. The Customer Experience and Behaviour Change team supports a wide range of initiatives and programmes, especially within Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety. This has enabled the Authority to continue its innovative approach to customer service and ensures its initiatives are evidence based and evaluated.
21. **Campaign effectiveness:** The team are working closely with the Engagement team using behaviour science to ensure the effectiveness of public safety campaigns and to support evaluation. This approach relies on gaining customer insight and using tried and tested persuasion techniques from social marketing, such as nudge, to influence people's behaviour.
22. For example, the team recently undertook research to inform two fire safety campaigns, both of which have launched recently. Research has been carried out into the behaviours and motivations surrounding unsafe behaviours relating to smoking and outdoor grassland fires. The smoking 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. A campaign focusing on grassland, woodland and crop fires, ran throughout the summer months when these types of fires peak each year. Both campaigns will be fully evaluated to measure their success and to support continuous improvement.
23. **Kitchen fires:** Research is continuing into the causes and behaviours surrounding kitchen fires as these account for the largest proportion of 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.
24. **Education research:** The team are also continuing to undertake research to inform the Authority's schools education programme. A new session has recently been developed for Year 8 pupils which is currently being piloted and will be fully evaluated. Research has commenced to inform a revision of the primary and pre-school education programme.
25. **Research into Gypsy and Traveller Communities:** A research proposal is being developed with an expert in the social barriers experienced by the Gypsy and Traveller community to better understand how to support this community access services provided by the Authority. Interview and focus group questions have been designed in order to gather insight from the Gypsy and Traveller community, which will inform whether there is a need for further support or behaviour change interventions.

26. **Institute of Customer Service ServiceMark:** Members will recall that an application was submitted for the Institute of Customer Service's ServiceMark - a highly sought-after accreditation which recognises excellent customer service. The assessment took place during June 2021 and the Service has been awarded the ServiceMark accreditation. Kent is the first fire and rescue service to achieve this highly prestigious award.
27. **Customer Satisfaction Awards:** 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. Despite these accolades the team are not complacent and have ambitious plans to ensure the customer centric culture of the Authority is fully embedded and central in all business areas.

### **Collaboration Team Update**

28. **Pride events:** The Collaboration team supported a number of Pride events across Kent and Medway throughout the summer. The Authority met many hundreds of people at the events and promoted recruitment and home safety campaigns.
29. **Pride in Care Chartermark:** The team have been working to achieve the Pride in Care Chartermark by November 2021. The Chartermark will allow the Authority to demonstrate its commitment to delivering high-quality, inclusive, safe and supportive services to older LGBTQ+ customers.
30. **Unaccompanied asylum seekers:** The team is working to support unaccompanied asylum seekers in living in Kent and Medway by providing fire safety advice, addressing vulnerabilities and supporting management staff. This work is also now extended to Syrian resettlement and Afghan resettlement schemes. An example of this work included engagement at one hotel, which temporarily accommodated 62 Afghan refugees, was welcomed and proved successful.

### **Customer Safety Update**

31. **Risk information:** The Customer Safety team started working on phase three of the Dynamics 365 project in September. The project will allow the Customer Safety teams to share real time, accurate and up-to-date risk information with operational teams. The team are looking forward to seeing the efficiencies the new system will bring and the opportunity to better support and safeguard our customers.
32. **Safe and Well:** Safe and Well officers have continued to deliver services to our customers throughout the pandemic. The Safe and Well team have recently increased the number of visits they are completing. Since the summer, the team are now carrying out in excess of 900 Safe and Well visits per month. The visits provide home fire safety interventions and officers work with customers to create escape plans and safer behaviours.

33. **Education visits:** During the last school year, the Authority's Education team visited six schools and engaged with 997 students. Access to secondary schools has proven particularly difficult in recent months, however, officers are exploring ways to reach schools where visits have not been possible. There has been greater success in reaching primary schools throughout Kent and Medway. For the academic year 2020/21, officers engaged with 75 primary schools. This equates to 17,390 students. After a challenging time for school visits, this was a very successful result.
34. The Education team also supported 'Safety in Action events' via live video sessions, reaching approximately 2,584 students. The team supported Kent and Medway partners with filming and adapted well to this new way of working, sharing their learning and the experience gained from delivering a virtual service.

## Engagement

35. **Digital Experience Platform and public website:** Work continues with supplier CIVIC to develop the Authority's new digital experience platform, which will include a new website that will be compliant in accessibility and user experience and interface. Its aim will be to enhance communication and engagement between the Authority and our customers across Kent and Medway. There will be a transitioning from our old website to the new site between the end of September and November 2021.
36. **Smoke Outside, Feel Safer Inside campaign:** The Authority launched a year-long campaign on 21 July 2021, designed to highlight the dangers of smoking indoors, and encourage smokers to do so outdoors. Extensive research helped to shape the multi-channel campaign, and select relevant behaviour change techniques. As part of the campaign, a 30-Day 'Step Outside Challenge' was launched on 9 August. A number of smokers in Kent and Medway are participating and attempting to consistently smoke outside, instead of inside their homes, for a full 30 days.
37. **Together magazine:** The second edition of the new Together magazine has been published. This was formed as part of the revamped Safe and Well/Home Fire Safety Visit materials. It's a bi-seasonal magazine which is given to customers who have a visit from the Authority. It's focused on home safety with a seasonal approach towards its content. The main purpose is to engage and support behaviour change and offer reassurance, reaffirming the messages given during our visits.

## Events

38. **Covid Safe event:** A trial Covid safe event was held at the Authority's headquarters over the summer. The aim of the event was to look at running events for customers in a safe and securer way during the pandemic. A small number of colleagues were invited to book tickets through Eventbrite and attend our event to experience a scaled back version of our station open day. We trialled a number of activities including the Byrnes family show, hook a duck, water display and more. The event and all the activities were risk assessed to be Covid safe and measures were taken to ensure government guidance were adhered to.

39. **Family Open day:** As a result of the successful Covid Safe event, a small-scale family open day was held on Friday 27 August. The event was a scaled back version of our usual summer open days and based on the delivery of the Covid Safe Activity, with a maximum capacity of 150 tickets available for the people to book. Customer feedback has been very positive and will be incorporated into future events.
40. **Fun in the dark events:** Over the next few weeks, officers will be developing plans to deliver three autumn events during October half-term week. It is anticipated the events will run from 3pm-5pm and be held at on-call fire stations. Once the plans and risk assessments have been developed, the events will be ticket only and marketed on social media to ensure they meet Covid guidelines.

### **Volunteers Update**

41. July 2021 was the busiest month since the Volunteer Response team was formed up in 2016. There were a total of 20 individual call outs to incidents with 53 customers receiving support from the team. The Volunteer Response team have been to 69 incidents this year, providing customer support and care.
42. **Volunteer recruitment:** The Authority welcomed 10 new volunteers from the January recruitment campaign. All new volunteers have now completed their induction and role specific training and are now starting to volunteer. A further 10 volunteers were successful at interview from the June recruitment campaign and will join us to support our safety events, building safety volunteer activity and resource hub.
43. **Volunteer anniversary event:** On 22 July 2021, the Authority welcomed volunteers to the Service's Headquarters to celebrate 10 years of the Volunteer scheme. The High Sheriff of Kent presented the Volunteer Response team with an award in recognition of invaluable services to the community through the pandemic.

### **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](mailto:james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org)

44. 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.
45. A total of 95 Freedom of Information requests have so far been received in 2021/22 (up to and including 20/09/2021). For comparison, at the end of the same period in 2020/21 the Authority received 90 Freedom of Information requests (out of a total of 216 for that year). Apart from one, 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). The one that exceeded the period was caused by a delay in obtaining the relevant information due to colleagues being on leave. The requester was kept informed of this fact.

46. Four subject access requests have so far been received in 2021/22 (up to and including 20/09/2021). 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).
47. **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.
48. 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).
49. 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
50. 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	55	40		
The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed	0	6		
The number of the received requests that were processed in full	55	34		
The number of requests where the information was granted in full	45	22		
The number of requests where the information was refused in full	3	3		
The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part	7	9		
The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review	1	1		
Number of subject access requests**	1	3		

\* Q2 is currently incomplete as it covers the period from 01/07/2021 to 20/09/2021

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

### **Publication scheme update**

51. The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a 'publication scheme', which sets out the classes of information that are held and published along with the length of time that information is retained for.
52. The Authority's publication and retention scheme ('the scheme') organises all of the Authority's information into 13 distinct classes, each of which are based on the key functions performed and undertaken by the Authority.
53. Each class of information is further organised into a series of sub-classes so as to aid the identification and categorisation of the numerous types of information that are held. Against each of these is the period of time for which the information will be held before it is deleted.
54. A wholesale review of the scheme has been undertaken in order to do the following: update the classes of information listed; show any event-based retention triggers

within information classes; and create three distinct retention periods for SharePoint document libraries: short term (7 years, the default retention period); medium term (15 years); and long term (50 years).

#### **G. Transparency in Supply Chains Statement**

*Tina Butler, Head of Commercial and Procurement*

01622 692121 ext. 7796, [tina.butler@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:tina.butler@kent.fire-uk.org)

55. Members will recall considering the Modern Slavery Policy at the meeting held on 23 February 2021, and the update provided to the last meeting of the Authority held on 22 July 2021. Part of the requirements of the Modern Slavery Policy is the publication of a Transparency in Supply Chains Statement. The statement has now been completed and demonstrates the work the authority has and will continue to undertake to eradicate modern slavery in its supply arrangements. The statement was agreed as urgent action in consultation with the Chair and is attached at **Appendix 2** for Members' information.

#### **H. Pensions and Pensions Board Update**

*Lead/Contact Officer: Mark Rist, Director, Operations (Chair of the Pension Board)*

01622 692121 ext. 8959, [mark.rist@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:mark.rist@kent.fire-uk.org)

56. 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 3** for Members' information.

### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

### **CONCLUSION**

58. Members are requested to:

- 56.1 Consider and note the contents of the report.



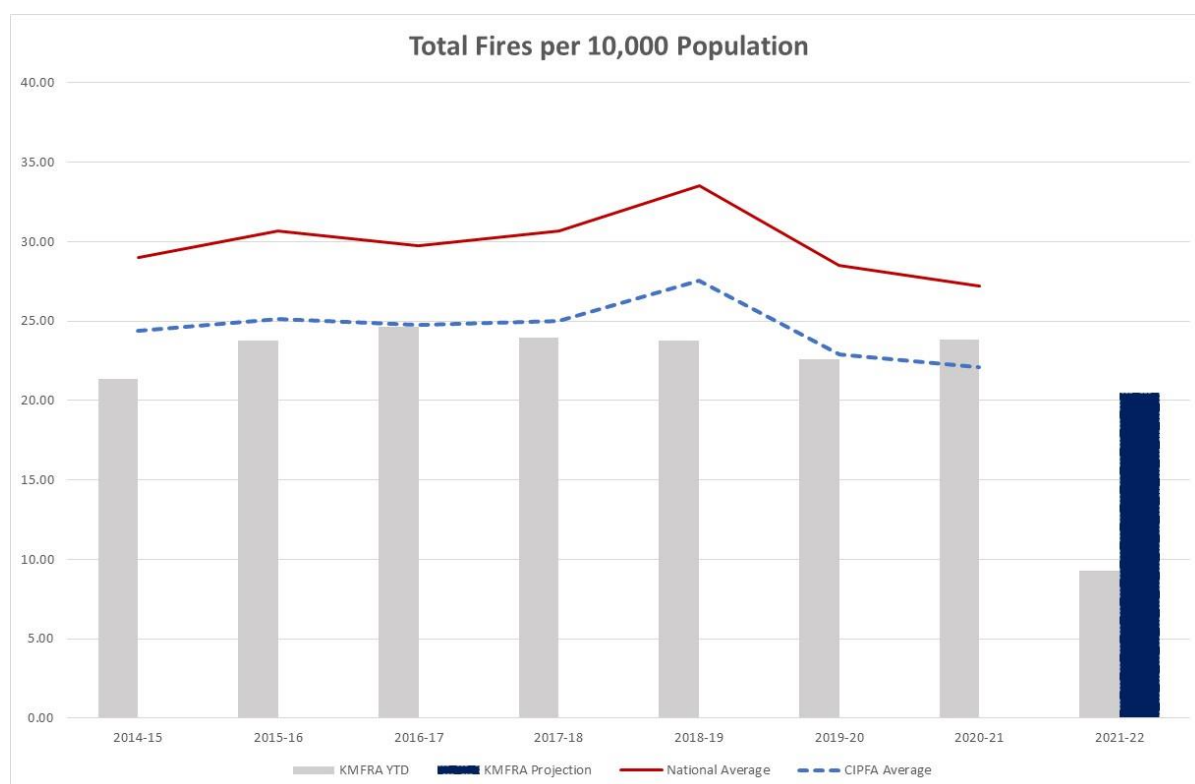
## PERFORMANCE UPDATE

### Introduction

1. This report detail how the Authority has performed in recent years, is predicted to perform this year and over the medium term period alongside how that compares nationally and within the CIPFA Nearest Neighbour Group<sup>1</sup>, where possible. Members will recall that this year is the start of a new medium term reporting period and therefore predictions for the next three years should be treated with caution.

### Total Fires

2. The Authority has attended 1,726 fires so far this year which is a decrease of 31% when compared to the same period the previous year. This decrease is attributed to a considerable reduction of accidental grassland and rubbish fires in the period than seen in the previous year which will have been heavily influenced by the weather over the summer period this year. The three year average projection for the 2021-24 period is 3,721 which is lower than the target of 4,210.



<sup>1</sup> This model was developed by CIPFA to aid local authorities in comparative and benchmarking exercises. This model allows users to generate family groups based upon a wide range of socio-economic indicators. The CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Model adopts a scientific approach to measuring the similarity between authorities, taking factors such as the social and physical characteristics of the authorities into account. The authorities included in our CIPFA group are: Hampshire, Essex, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Devon & Somerset, West Sussex, Cheshire, Nottinghamshire, Humberside, Hereford & Worcester, Northamptonshire and Norfolk.

3. Over the last few years the Authority has seen a consistently higher level of fire activity than that seen in 2014/15, mostly attributed to warm dry summers where outdoor fires are heavily influenced by the weather. The chart above shows that this is not a trend that has only affected this Authority and that it is also true nationally and amongst our CIPFA nearest neighbour cohort, with the exception of 2020/21 where our activity levels increased yet nationally they did not. So far this year the levels of fire activity is significantly lower than both last year and the previous three year average.
4. The chart also depicts that this Authority is experiencing fewer fires per 10,000 population than the national average and is mostly consistent with the CIPFA average. The published data for 2020/2021 details that Kent ranks 31<sup>st</sup> for the number of fires per 10,000 population out of 45 services which is a considerable change compared to 2019/20 (ranked 16<sup>th</sup>). The majority of services reported a reduction in fire activity last year compared to the previous but the reason for this as it stands is unclear.
5. The table below details the number of fires so far this year split into the different types. Members will recognise that the number of outdoor fires (rubbish and grassland) is low for the summer months than we would generally expect.

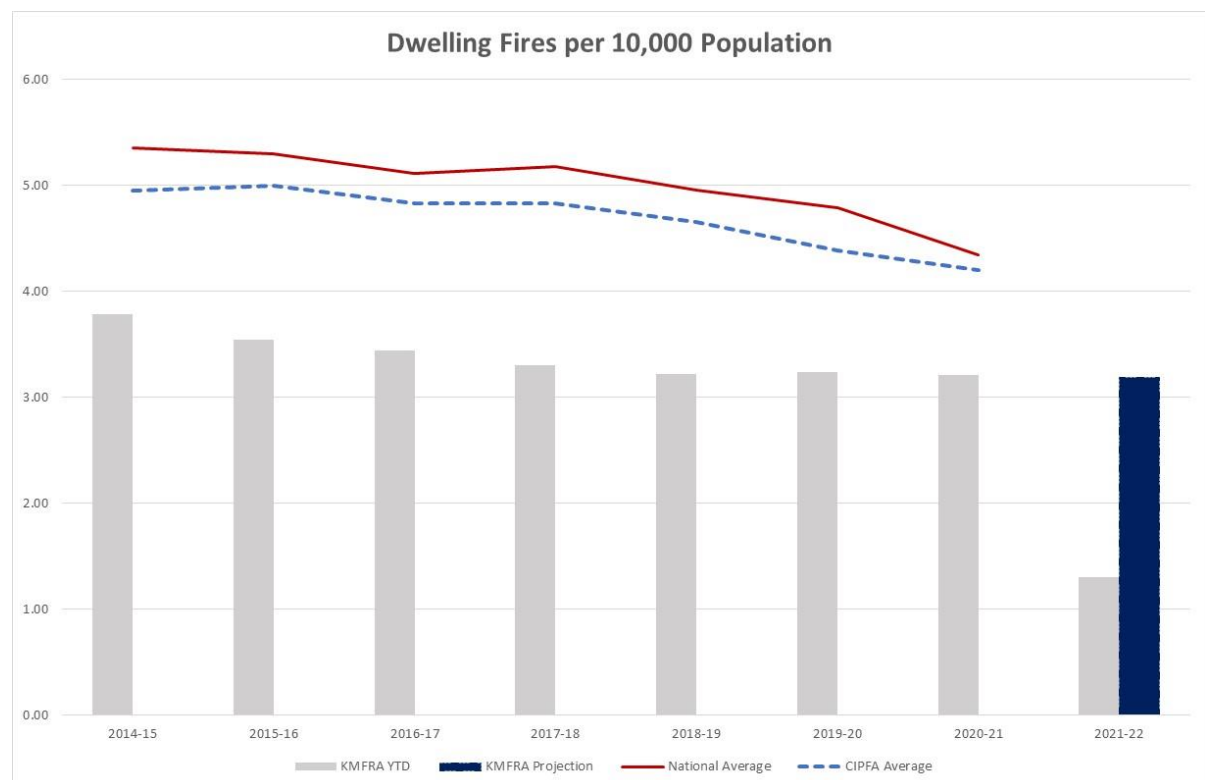
	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>
Outdoor	272	137	105	100	98
Outdoor Structure	83	46	57	55	62
Dwelling	91	64	32	46	49
Road Vehicle	50	51	58	61	42
Non Residential	45	36	22	27	18
Other Residential	2	6	4	3	--
Boat	--	--	2	--	1
Rail Vehicle	1	--	--	--	--

### **Dwelling Fires**

6. In recent years the Authority has reported the lowest ever number of accidental fires in the home. So far this year 211 incidents have been attended which is lower than the levels seen in the previous years. The current projection for the medium term period (2021-24) is 520 which is 2.3% better than the target. As we enter the autumn and winter period of the year the number of accidental fires in the home will likely increase but this is a recurring trend and the projections have taken this into account.
7. Unfortunately accessing comparable information for fire services that fit this Authority's local performance indicator definitions is difficult. It is not possible to obtain accidental fires in the home detailed by individual authorities nor is it possible to obtain the number of dwellings in each Authority area. For the purposes of benchmarking ourselves against others we can compare all fires in the home, which although that will include those started deliberately the numbers are relatively small in comparison to

those started accidentally. To ensure the number of incidents is more representative of the size of the community that is served we have used population as the denominator.

8. The chart below shows that a reduction in the number of fires in the home is not a trend that has only been experienced by this Authority and that it is reflected both nationally and with CIPFA.
9. Members will notice that whilst the trend is the same, this Authority is experiencing fewer fires in the home per 10,000 population than both the national average and the CIPFA average. The published data for 2019/2020 details that Kent ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> for the number of fires in the home per 10,000 population out of 45 services.



10. The causes of fires in the home rarely change, with cooking relating incidents accounting for 35% of all the incidents so far this year and a further 13% and 9% being attributed to electrical appliances and smoking materials respectively. Please also be aware that 16 of the 211 incidents can be attributed to candles or oil/incense burners.

### Fatalities and Casualties in Accidental Fires

11. As a result of accidental fires, so far this year, three people have died and 24 people have suffered fire related injuries. There has also been one serious and six slight injuries reported as a result of deliberate fires this year.

12. Identifying trends in casualty data should always be carried out with caution due to the relatively small numbers involved. In comparison to last year, we have had 18 fewer injuries in accidental fires.
13. The table below details the number of fire related casualties by financial year and severity of injury. Please note that the figures listed for 2021/2022 only cover five months.

	<b>Fatal</b>	<b>Serious</b>	<b>Slight</b>	<b>Total</b>
2014/2015	3	12	64	79
2015/2016	3	12	79	94
2016/2017	5	17	97	119
2017/2018	5	16	104	125
2018/2019	4	11	86	101
2019/2020	5	17	104	126
2020/2021	7	21	59	87
2021/2022	3	9	15	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>758</b>

### **Road Traffic Collisions**

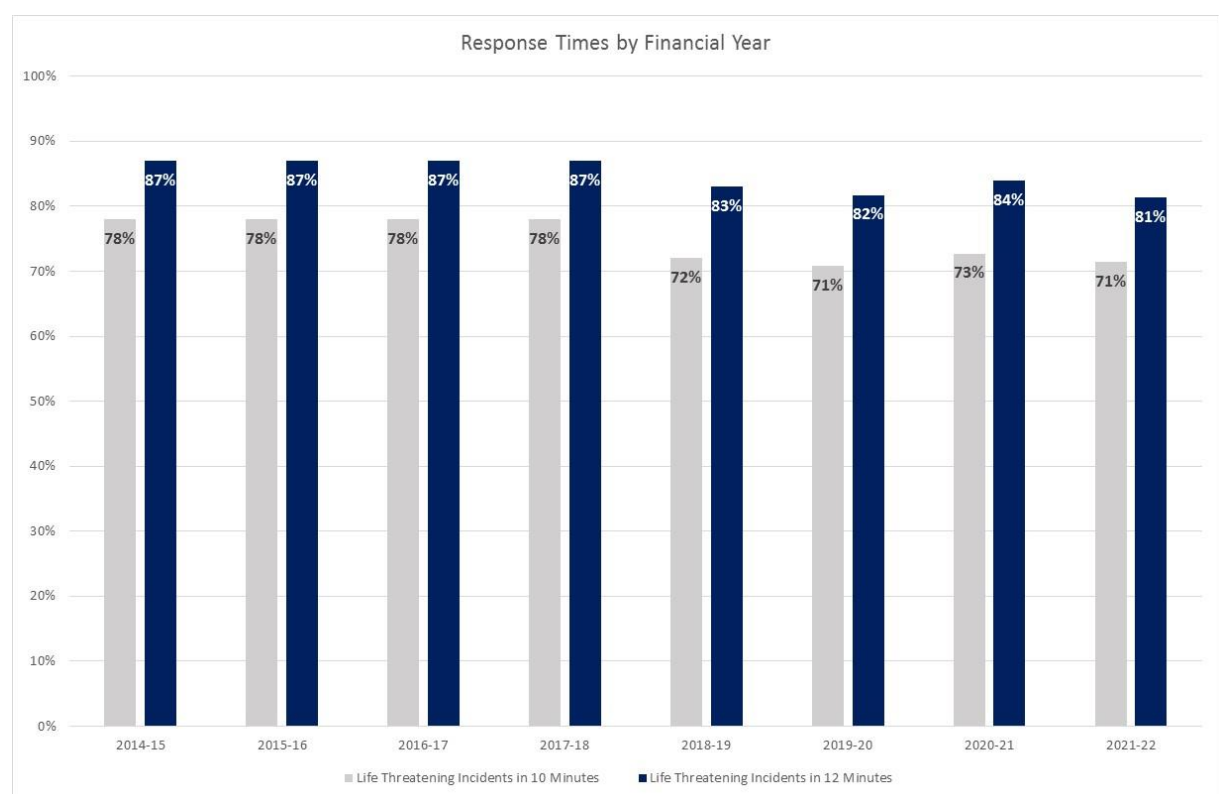
14. The Authority has attended 405 road traffic collisions so far this year which is 156 more than the same period in the previous year. During the lockdown periods in 2020 we saw a significant reduction in the number of road traffic collisions however the level of incidents recorded so far this year are back in line with the levels we would expect.. As a result of these incidents eight people have died and 59 have been seriously injured.
15. Of the road traffic collisions incidents attended this year 72% have required the Authority to make the scene or the vehicle safe, such as dealing with fuel spillages. A further 23% of the incidents required a person/s to be extricated or removed from an affected vehicle.

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

16. The Authority continue to provide emergency medical response in support of SECamb. So far this year, 1,463 incidents were responded to and 1,325 were attended. On 138 occasions the Authority's resources were stood down before they arrived.
17. The vast majority of these incidents were attended by a crew in a fire engine, however we do have officers responding in cars which accounted for 209 of the incidents (14%).
18. This year the Authority has responded to assist other agencies, for example to lift a person or assist in the search for a missing person, 817 times. In addition to these crews have also responded to 639 incidents to gain entry to a property for either the occupier or for our emergency services colleagues.

## Response Times

19. So far this year 71.4% of life-threatening incidents were reached within 10 minutes and 81.4% within 12 minutes. Members will recall that the targets for these indicators were changed for the 2020/21 financial year to 71% and 82% respectively.
20. The Authority attended life-threatening fire incidents within 10 minutes on 76.2% occasions whilst life-threatening road traffic collisions were reached within 10 minutes on 61.5% of occasions. Non-life threatening incidents were attended within 15 minutes on 91% of occasions.
21. The chart below details performance for attending life threatening incidents within 10 minutes and 12 minutes for the last seven financial years and this year to date.



## Availability

22. The Authority aims to have an maximum 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. The table below details the average number of fire engines available during the day (9am-6pm) and in the evening (6pm to 9am). Of the number available, 26 of these are full-time fire engines and the remainder on-call.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Day	33	34	44	32
Night	51	50	57	49

### **Customer and Business Safety**

23. The Authority's Customer Safety teams have delivered 4,671 Safe and Well Visits to customers across the County. In addition to these visits, 14 telephone assessments have been carried out, and crews have carried out 1,129 Home Fire Safety Visits..
24. The level of building consultations received by the Authority from local authority building control in 2020/21 lower than the previous year. Of the 68 received this year we responded to them within 21 days on 99% of occasions which is slightly above the target of 98%.
25. Building consultations received from Approved Inspectors have been completed within 21 days on 100% of occasions this year which is higher than the target of 98%. The number of these consultations has decreased this year from 360 in 2020/21 to 286.

### **Corporate Health**

26. Between April and August 2021, 3.59% of all contracted hours have been lost due to sickness which is higher than 2020/21 (3.08%). Operational staff lost 4.57% of contracted hours to sickness and corporate teams' staff lost 1.39%.
27. 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. Seven RIDDOR-reportable injuries have been recorded so far this year, which is higher than the four incidents recorded in the whole of the previous year.

## Transparency in Supply Chains statement 2020/21

**This statement sets out the steps taken during 2020/21 by Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and is published in accordance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Transparency in Supply Chains) Regulations 2015.**

### Introduction

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is committed to respecting, protecting, and championing the human rights of all who come into contact with our Service, including our employees, supply chain workers, customers and local communities. We have zero tolerance of modern slavery, and it is therefore totally unacceptable in our organisation and supply chains. We welcome the increasing momentum towards mandatory human-rights due diligence and are therefore fully committed to supporting the Government tackle modern slavery, which is an important element of our approach to delivering our Service

We accept our responsibility to be more transparent; to find and resolve problems; to review our procurement practices regularly; and to collaborate with others to protect the rights of workers, particularly those who are most vulnerable to abuses such as modern slavery.

### About the Authority

Customer is at the heart of everything we do. Our customer promise sets out what everyone is entitled to expect from us:

*Everyone at Kent Fire and Rescue Service works together as one team to keep the people of Kent and Medway safe. Our promise sets out our commitment to all our customers as we work with them to create a safer future for Kent and Medway:*

- *To provide excellent services*
- *To provide personalised and accessible services*
- *To maintain your trust*
- *To work with you and to keep improving.*

We pride ourselves on the importance that we place on respect, equality, diversity and inclusivity in everything that we do. That's why it is so important to us that neither we, nor any of our suppliers ever knowingly take part in any form of modern slavery.

We are committed to acting ethically, with integrity and we're committed to putting effective processes and procedures in place to prevent any form of modern slavery taking place within our Service and supply chains. We're committed to making sure our Customers, our teams and employees of our suppliers are safe and treated fairly. We only intend on sourcing from suppliers who share this same commitment.

We have 1,550 members of our team across an estate of 55 stations, a training centre, control centre and service headquarters within the area of Kent and Medway. We also have around 50 volunteers available to support customers.

Despite the pandemic, our services remained accessible for all customers and we undertook over 10,000 safe and well visits over the last year.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for the Fire and Rescue Services in terms of provision of personal protective equipment consumables needed to protect our front-line and our customers against the deadly virus. We took the lead role in sourcing this for all public agencies in Kent and Medway, as well as nationally for all Fire and Rescue Services. A key element of the due diligence undertaken when sourcing personal protective equipment has been transparency in terms of modern slavery risks and mitigations, and building resilience within trusted supply chains to ensure social protection systems are in place for all workers within a high risk market in terms of modern slavery challenges.

Working with our strategic supplier, offshore supply chain sourcing has been managed in terms of modern slavery through the following process:

- Initial vetting of factory profiles – ethical, environmental, financial, quality - vetting of all certifications in line with the Ethical Trading Initiative Base and the Modern Slavery Act.
- On-site audit of factories against the data has been provided as a result of initial vetting undertaken by the supplier's offshore agents.
- Ongoing surveillance both onsite and through reviewing documents they update via the supplier's offshore agents.

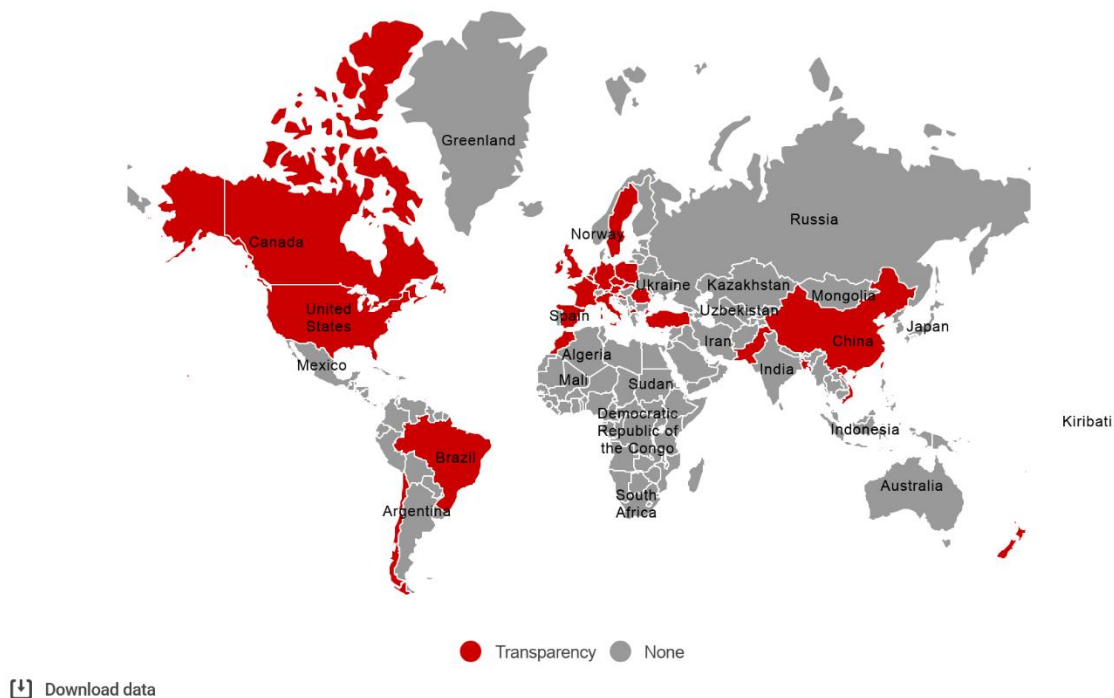
Our supplier's offshore agents have played a critical role in helping us maintain standards in regards to modern slavery during the pandemic due to limitations on British citizens travelling abroad. Best use has been made of modern technology, with video conferencing enabling us to live-stream at the factories to be able to review the working conditions ahead of any investment decisions.

We recognise our responsibility and influence as a public service dedicated to keeping our customers and communities safe and we therefore must ensure that the long-term impacts of the pandemic on the personal protective equipment /garment industry, which pose a threat to the protection of workers human rights, is monitored and mitigated.

### **Our Sourcing Map**

Our average annual spend with third parties is £20m and we currently source a variety of goods and services from 28 countries worldwide.





Made with infogram

### List of countries we source goods and services from

- United Kingdom
- Austria
- Bangladesh
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- North Macedonia
- Morocco
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Pakistan
- Poland
- Republic of Ireland
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Taiwan
- Turkey
- USA
- Vietnam

### Due diligence and assessment of suppliers

As part of our efforts to monitor and reduce the risk of slavery and human trafficking occurring within our supply chains we have enhanced our minimum requirements contained within our criteria of supplier assessment which form the core of our supplier selection process. We have started to adopt this approach for all our projects that source from high risk markets.

We now expect our suppliers to sign up to the [Modern Slavery Assessment Tool](#), regardless of whether the supplier is a relevant organisation as defined by Section 54 of the Act or not. We act reasonably and proportionately with our request to do so and will ensure that small and medium sized enterprises are not disadvantaged by our requirements, but are given support to help raise awareness.

This will enable our suppliers to have:

- Mapping and transparency on all parts of their supply chain;
- Identification of any risks within their supply base and strategies in place to mitigate this risk.

We also seek assurances regarding specific modern slavery training provided to staff within the organisation; require confirmation that workers receive all the necessary equipment, tools, any uniforms and personal protective equipment free of charge in order for them to perform their role; that their workers are aware of their rights to freely leave and seek other employment; demonstration of fair working practices; and to disclose any ongoing investigations or charges that they are aware of in relation to modern slavery or human rights abuses within their own organisation or throughout their supply chain(s).

### **Audit and Risk Assessment**

The Authority's approach to risk assessment comprises of both initial, and ongoing desk-based research, supply chain mapping, and auditing and stakeholder engagement. It is fair to say that, whilst we are mindful of the limitation of audit, working with our Tier 1 suppliers, it is a critical enabler in the discovery and management of modern slavery risks throughout our supply chains.

As we have gone further down our supply chains, we have also encountered challenges. This has included the time it takes to map supply chains several tiers down, and reluctance from entities further down the chain to undertake additional due diligence at the request of a customer several steps removed and where our purchasing power may be small.

Given the high risk, we have predominantly focussed on the clothing category to pilot our enhanced approach to due diligence, which includes personal protective equipment, uniforms, ceremonial wear and specialist personal protective equipment (for specific incidents such as wildfire and water rescue).

All of our Tier 1 suppliers have signed up to the Tool, and have started to make incremental improvements on their initial score. One particular supplier is now conducting a bigger study within their supply chain and using the recommendations from the Tool to assist them in their engagement with their supply chains.

All Tier 1 suppliers for this category have been engaged with in regards to looking at one item offered via our contracts in order to undertake a block-chain approach to establishing traceability of the item, which will track the final product back to source/raw material state. This will identify the processes or gates the product will go through in order to provide 100% transparency and identify areas of modern slavery risk.

### **Policies**

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

- Modern Slavery Policy
- Speak Up Policy
- Transparency Policy
- Safeguarding Policy:
  - Guidance Document C27 – How to raise a safeguarding concern.
  - Guidance Document C28 – Safeguarding Terms and Definitions.
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

In the event that a modern slavery risk is identified, our Modern Slavery Policy provides links to comprehensive statutory guidance to ensure that the appropriate action is swiftly taken.

### **Learning and Development**

- **Our front-line:**

Our Safeguarding Manager has undertaken 'Stop the Traffik' train the trainer training and has since successfully delivered this to all Safe and Well Officers, Building Safety Teams, Designated Safeguarding Officers and call handlers as well as Station Managers who will be attending Community Safety Unit meetings for their local area.

As the Authority is not a first responder for safeguarding we have introduced a checklist for all Designated Safeguarding Officers to use when dealing with calls from members of our teams requesting advice when they have concerns for modern slavery and trafficking. The purpose of this is to gather as much information as possible while crews or colleagues are at the incident so that we can share this information swiftly with our Police partners as we are well aware that tracing people can be an incredibly difficult task once potential victims have been identified.

- **All of our teams:**

Modern day slavery also features in the newly written safeguarding children and adults e-learning package which is now live and rolled out for all new starters and will be rolled out as refresher training.

Our intranet has a refreshed modern day slavery page where all members of our teams can find information on signs and symptoms and how to process and raise a safeguarding concern.

- **Commercial and Procurement:**

Our Clothing and PPE Category Manager has attended the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) course on Modern Slavery in the Supply Chain. Sessions with the wider team to share learning and ideas have since taken place to maximise the training opportunity.

The team also participate in webinars to learn from keynote speakers regarding real-life modern slavery cases, along with Local Government sessions to share experiences and best practice across Government agencies.

### **Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement**

Partnerships are integral for the Authority in addressing modern slavery risks. Key organisations and initiatives we partner with are;

Partner	Who	Issues/Areas of work	Working together
Stop the Traffik	Registered Charity building a global picture of human trafficking hotspots and trends through information sharing and collaboration.	To build resilience into communities, and to encourage appropriate response and reporting.	Providing training and support to KMFRSA Safeguarding Manager
The Salvation Army	24/7 support	Modern Slavery Helpline available 24/7.	Support provided via the helpline if concerns are identified and further advice needed.
Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority	Non-Departmental Public Body set up to protect vulnerable and exploited workers.	Investigate reports of worker exploitation and illegal activity such as human trafficking, forced labour and illegal labour provision, as well as offences under the National Minimum Wage and Employment Agencies Acts.	Point of reference for knowledge, skills and experience in terms of all aspects of human rights abuse.
Police	Emergency services partner	First responders for modern slavery issues	Sharing of information if detected to help trace individuals.  Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Co-ordinator provided training to our Designated Safeguarding Officers and Head of Commercial and Procurement
UK Fire and Rescue Services	Fire and Rescue Sector	Sharing of information and learning	Sharing of model template for Modern Slavery Policy for adoption sector-wide.

### Proposal for 2021/22

We understand that the approach to modern slavery will require ongoing assessment of our Service and supply chains - minimising the risk of its occurrence. We'll work towards

reducing the risk within our business in the coming year. To do this, the aim is to address the following key areas and report progress in the next statement:

- **Learning and development** – maintaining compliance while reviewing and making improvements to our learning materials
- **Risk mitigation** – develop a modern slavery risk and incident management process for our Commercial and Procurement Team. Once completed, training of the new agreed process shall be provided to relevant stakeholders. We shall also introduce specific modern slavery contract terms to our standard terms and conditions.
- **Audit compliance** – continued improvements to our ethical audit programme compliance and monitoring

### **Learning and development**

We'll continue to focus on making sure we raise awareness across everyone that works for us by rolling out our adult safeguarding e-learning, which includes content on modern slavery. This is mandatory for all new starters. Compliance is recorded using our Learning Management System. Learners are required to renew this learning every two years.

- **All of our teams:**

Modern slavery to be included within the main areas of safeguarding training to be rolled out to all staff. Specific roles will determine whether members of our teams receive level 2, 3 or 4 training, i.e, call handler level 2 Designated Safeguarding Officer level 4. This is evidenced in our Safeguarding Policy.

The training plan is scheduled to start October 2021 and will be reviewed annually.

- **Our front-line:**

Our Safeguarding Manager and Education Manager shall be attending the National Fire Chief Council's train the trainer session on fire service bespoke safeguarding. This shall then be rolled out to all relevant staff.

- **Commercial and Procurement:**

The entire Commercial and Procurement team shall undertake the CIPS Ethical Procurement and Supply E-Learning, and will also sign up to the CIPS Corporate Code of Ethics and Ethics statement, which means that we shall be listed on the CIPS Corporate Ethical Register and will observe the conditions of use of the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark as defined in the CIPS Corporate Ethical Procurement. It is crucial that we can evidence our commitment to ethical practice, professionalism and accountability.

Continue to participate in webinars to expand our learning and exposure to actions taken and lessons learned from real-life cases found within supply chains.

### **Audit and Risk Assessment**

We will continue to work on our approach to address the challenges that we have encountered with disclosure throughout our supply chains and will report transparently where we find them. We will engage in collaborative work to bring greater influence on

challenging areas of our supply chains. We will also ensure that our Tier 1 suppliers arrange for site inspections of their supply chains, working to an agreed audit methodology that ensures assessment of modern slavery risks and takes into account the approach taken with our strategic partner during the pandemic.

### **Risk Mitigation**

We'll develop the modern slavery incident management process. We'll provide communications and engagement to all relevant stakeholders once the process receives approval and add appropriate references into the training plan.

We shall further enhance the obligations on our suppliers by introducing modern slavery compliance clauses in all of our standard terms and conditions. We shall warrant that when it comes to modern slavery, they take steps to investigate and identify issues relating to the Modern Slavery Act and will notify us immediately if they become aware of any issues within their supply chains.

We'll work with our Tier 1 suppliers to ensure that they are committed to providing training to workers and their local suppliers on modern slavery risks and compliance.

We will continue our work with our high risk Tier 1 suppliers to map their supply chains to understand where there the highest risk of slavery is.

### **Assessment of Effectiveness**

The next year will undoubtedly see a continuation of the many challenges as the impacts of COVID-19 are felt across many of our supply chains and communities. Transparency in our supply chains is a fundamental aspect of our approach to continuous improvement in our procurement practices and is something that we will continue to prioritise. With issues as complex and hidden as modern slavery, it becomes even more important to shine a light on the problem areas if we are to address them effectively. By working with our Tier 1 suppliers to map our supply chains and sharing information within our Sector and beyond, we make it more likely that issues will be identified and addressed.

We are focussed on delivering our commitments to the protection of human rights, worker voice and empowerment. We will continue to assess, develop and extend our approach to modern slavery across all aspects of our Service and we will continue to collaborate with our partners to reduce risks of modern slavery wherever they occur.

Signed

Nick Chard – Chair – Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority  
Ann Millington – Chief Executive – Kent Fire and Rescue Service

**MINUTES OF PENSION BOARD MEETING  
21 September 2021**

**Present:**

Mark Rist (MR)	KFRS (Employer Representative) (Chair)
David Broughton (DBr)	FBU (Deputy Employee Representative)

**Also In Attendance:**

Karen Irvine (KI)	Assistant Director, HR and Learning
Matthew Deadman(MD)	Assistant Director, Response
Marie Curry (MC)	Business Support Manager/ Clerk
David Stanbury (DS)	Pensions Manager (Scheme Manager Representative)

**Apologies:**

James Finch (JF)	KFRS (Employer Representative)
Danny Barrett (DB)	FBU (Employee Representative)
Lawrence Pater (LP)	FOA (Employee Representative)
Dylan McEvoy	FRSA Representative (Employee Representative)

<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	Date: 4 February 2022
	Venue: Skype
	Time: 10am

1. Due to the number of apologies for this meeting, it was agreed by those in attendance to hold this meeting with an update on the information items only. Any items requiring a decision will be circulated to the Board for agreement and captured as part of these minutes.

**2. Welcome and Introductions**

MR welcomed DS to Kent Fire and Rescue Service and his first meeting of the Board.

**3. Declarations of Interest of Items on this agenda**

None.

**4. Membership Changes**

KI informed colleagues of the changes in the membership of the Employer Representatives which will be from immediate effect. These are as follows

Mark Rist (MR), Chair of the Board – Employer Representative. MR was elected Chair of the Board at the last meeting.

Matthew Deadman (MD), Vice Chair of the Board – Employer Representative

Karen Irvine, Employer Representative

David Stanbury – Scheme Manager Representative

JF will be standing down as an Employer Representative on the Board. Thanks was given to JF for his contribution.

MC to circulate the changes to seek agreement from the Board. **(Action: MC)**

**5. Minutes of the Pension Board held on 18 May 2021**

MC to circulate the minutes of the previous meeting to seek agreement from Board members before being agreed as a true record.

**6. Pension Board Action Log - Update on Progress**

KI stated that there are no outstanding actions since last meeting of the Board.

**7. LPP Risk and Compliance Report**

KI gave a brief overview of the detail contained within the report. MC to circulate this report to Board members and any queries on the report to be sent to KI **(Action: MC/KI)**

**8. Update on Cases (Standing Item)**

McCloud vs Sargent Case

KI said that all relevant paperwork in terms of the contractual arrangements with LPP to support the workload from this case have now been signed. She added that LPP are in the process of setting up a new team, which should be in place by November, solely dedicated to support the administration of the workload. She said that within her Payroll team, she is adjusting



resources so that there is a full-time person in post to support the processing of data and this person should be in place by 1<sup>st</sup> October. KI said that there are currently fortnightly pension sessions being held for those people who are thinking of retiring and have completed 25–30 years' service as it is these individuals who will be affected by Immediate Detriment. KI said that as much work is being done as possible to inform those eligible to think about their options so that we are able to share details with LPP in plenty of time before the individual's retirement date.

DBr asked for clarity on the declaration form that was being sent out to individuals to sign so that he was clear on what this was for. KI said that the declaration is an agreement between KFRS and the employee allowing for pensions to be paid in relation to Immediate Detriment on the back of the guidance as it stands. This is with the understanding that when full regulations are released there is the potential that what is detailed in these regulations may impact on what has been provided through the guidance. This would be in relation to any overpayment on pensions to an individual through the process. The declaration is a signed agreement by the individual to pay back any overpayments as a result.

KI said that a solution is being worked on currently where it would be possible for individuals to start buying back pension contributions from the 92 Scheme. She added that communication will go out next month to all those eligible who are likely to retire between now and March next year.

#### O'Brian Case

KI said that since the last meeting there has been no updates from Government with regards to this case. As soon as any detail is received KI will circulate to the Board.

#### IDRP Cases

KI said that there is one IDRP case at stage 1 of the process which was noted. She added that there has been one IDRP case since the last meeting that went to Stage 2 of the process but was not upheld by Members.

### **9. AOB**

DBr asked KI whether there was any progression on training for Board members since discussions at the last meeting. KI said that due to workload and the restrictions around Covid, she has not been able to progress this. However, KI said that she will now make contact with the LGA to arrange training through them for Pension Board members and will email details out as soon as she can. **(Action: KI)**

