



KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting of the Authority

Tuesday 5th July 2022

10.30am

AGENDA
KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday 5th July 2022 at 10.30am

Ask for: Marie Curry
Telephone: (01622) 692121

Held at Cornwallis Suite, Courtenay Road
Maidstone, ME15 6LF

Membership of Authority for 2022/23:-

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

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

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner:- Mr M Scott

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

A Routine Business

- A1. Election of Chair of the Authority for 2022/23
- A2. Election of Vice-Chair of the Authority for 2022/23
- A3. Chairman's Announcements *(if any)*
- A4. Membership Changes and Apologies for Absence
To note the Membership of the Authority (as above), and to receive any apologies for absence.
- A5. Declarations of Interest in Items on this Agenda
- A6. Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 25 November 2021 *(for information)*
- A7. Minutes of the Hearings Panel held on 18 February 2022 *(for information)*
- A8. Minutes of the Meeting of the Authority held on 21 February 2022 *(for approval)*
- A9. Minutes of the Hearings Panel held on Thursday 27 April 2022 *(for information)*

B For Decision

- B1. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies for 2022/23
- B2. Final Provisional Outturn for 2021/22
- B3. Financial Update 2022/23
- B4. Customer Safety Plan
- B5. Governance and Policy Updates

C For Information

- C1. Information Update *(Consolidated Report)*

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

E Exempt Items

E1. Motion to Exclude Press and Public

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

E2. Abatement

Marie Curry
Clerk to the Authority

22 June 2022

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

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on Thursday, 25 November 2021 at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

PRESENT:- Mr A Booth, Mr P Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr D Daley, Mr V Maple, Ms L Parfitt-Reid, Mr C Simkins and Mr S Tranter.

APOLOGIES:- Mr P Harman and Ms S Hudson

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss A Millington QFSM; the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Ms A Kilpatrick; Director Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety, Mr J Quinn; Assistant Director, Operations, Mr M Deadman; Finance Manager, Mrs N Walker, Finance Manager Barrie Fullbrook and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:- Ms F Smith ,KCC Internal Audit

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chair for 2021/22

(Item A1)

- (1) Mr Tranter moved, Mr Collor seconded, that Mr Maple be elected Chair of the Committee.
- (2) There being no other nominations, Mr Maple was declared Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee for 2021/22.

2. Election of Vice-Chair for 2021/22

(Item A2)

- (1) Mr Maple moved, Mr Daley seconded, that Mr Tranter be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee.
- (2) There being no other nominations, Mr S Tranter was elected as Vice-Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee for 2021/22.

3. Chair's Announcements

(Item A3)

- (1) The Chair welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Committee
- (2) The Chair welcomed Frankie Smith from KCC Internal Audit to the meeting.

4. Membership

(Item A4)

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

5. Terms of Reference

(Item A6)

- (1) The Director Finance and Corporate Services provided an introduction to the Terms of Reference by stipulating the clear boundaries between the role and responsibilities of this Committee and that of the Authority.
- (2) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) The Terms of Reference for the Audit and Governance Committee be noted.

6. Mid-Year Treasury Management and Investment Update 2021/22

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

- (1) The Committee received a mid-year update on the treasury activity undertaken and the extent of the compliance with the agreed prudential indicators.
- (2) The Chair took the opportunity to thank Richard Bason for the training given to Members on Treasury Management prior to the meeting and requested that the slides from this training be circulated to all Members.
- (3) The Chair asked for reassurances on what checks have been put in place so that the Authority can be confident when it came to ensuring best value for money or that any investment returns were not at risk of becoming negative. The Director Finance and Corporate Services responded by saying that the Authority works closely with Link Asset where daily reviews take place on interest rates. She added that there are alert systems in place that if banking rates change the Authority is notified so this is closely monitored.
- (4) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) the treasury activity undertaken and detail contained within the report, be noted.

7. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2022/22-2025/26

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

- (1) The Committee received the draft Treasury Management Strategy for the 2022/23 financial year to consider prior to this being presented to the Authority meeting in February 2022.
- (2) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for the 2022/23 financial year, be approved in principle.

8. Corporate Risk Register

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

- (1) The Committee received the latest update on the Corporate Risk Register for consideration.
- (2) The Chair requested a training session for Members on risk as well as the familiarisation of the Register for the next Committee meeting.
- (3) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) the amendment to the Risk Register as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
 - (b) the addition of a new risk to the Register in relation to the accuracy and timeliness of data held by the Authority, be approved.
 - (c) The contents of the report be noted.

9. Internal Audit Progress Report

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

- (1) Ms F Smith from KCC Internal Audit, introduced for Members' consideration, the Internal Audit Progress report. The report provided an update of the work that KCC Internal Audit has carried out on behalf of the Authority against the 2021/22 Audit Plan since April 2021 and any outstanding actions for the 2020/21 Audit Plan.
- (2) The Chair asked, if it was possible, for any completed Audit reports to be circulated to the Members of this Committee as well as Group Leaders on an on-going basis. The Chair added, this will allow Members of the Committee to review and ask any questions prior to the meeting.
- (3) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) the changes to the 2021/22 Audit Plan as detailed in Appendix to the report, be approved;
 - (b) the progress made in relation to the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Audit Plan, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

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KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

HEARINGS PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of a Hearings Panel of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held virtually on Microsoft Teams on Friday 18, February 2022.

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

APOLOGIES:- Mr D Daley

OFFICERS:- Chief Executive, Miss A Millington QFSM, Director Finance and Corporate Services, Ms A Kilpatrick, Finance Manager, Mr B Fullbrook and Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chairman of the Panel

Mr Maple proposed Mr Chard, Mr Harman seconded.

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

2. Declarations of Interest

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

2. Signing of Minutes

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

3. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEM (Open Access to Minutes)

4. Pension Dispute – Stage 2 of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (IDRP) (Item 5 - Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)

(1) The Panel considered information relating to an appeal against the decision taken at the Stage 1 IDRP process in relation to Immediate Detriment payments under the McCloud/Sargeant ruling.

(2) In her response to the Stage 1 IDRP complaint, the Director Finance and Corporate Services outlined the process that was undertaken by which the decision was made to not uphold the appeal at this stage.

- (3) The Panel carefully examined all the information presented to it, including correspondence received from the complainant registering an appeal under the Stage 2 IDRPs, the reasons for the appeal as well as supporting evidence. The Panel also reviewed the note issued in November 2021 from HM Treasury in relation to their assessment of the advisability not to process the Immediate Detriment cases before new legislation to enact the McCloud remedy is in place and the implications of this assessment has on Home Office guidance.
- (4) The Panel noted that the Home Office guidance on the processing of Immediate Detriment was withdrawn due to the complexities and the impact involved on individuals around tax legislation.
- (5) The Panel also noted that the new Finance Act was expected to be effective from April 2022 and is hoped to bring some clarity to the tax liability surrounding additional payments under the ruling.
- (6) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) Having very carefully considered all the written evidence submitted to it, the Panel decided to not uphold the appeal but to pend their decision until such a time as there is more clarity around the tax issues which is hoped to be effective under new legislation in April of this year.
 - (b) The Clerk to the Authority will write to the complainant to explain the outcome of the Panel's decision.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Monday, 21 February 2022.

PRESENT:- Mr N Chard (Chair), Mr P Cole, Mr D Crow-Brown, Ms M Dawkins, Mr P Harman, Mr B Kemp, Ms S Hudson, Mr S Manion, Mr C Simkins, Mr S Tranter and Mr M Scott, Kent Police and Crime commissioner.

APOLOGIES:- Mr P Barrington-King, Mr A Booth, Mr D Beaney, Mr N Collor, Ms K Constantine, Mr D Daley, Mr M Dendor, Ms S Hohler, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr R Love OBE, Mr V Maple, Mr J McInroy, Ms L Parfitt-Reid, Mr A Ridgers, Mr R Thorne and the Authority's Independent Person, Mrs J Waterman.

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

IN ATTENDANCE:- Grant Thornton (External Auditor), Mr P Cuttle via MS Teams

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

33. Chairman's Announcements

(Item A1)

- (1) Members and Officers held a minute's silence to pay their respects to SECAmb Paramedic, Alice Clark, who sadly passed away following an incident on 5th January.
- (2) The Chair welcomed Mr Paul Cuttle, from Grant Thornton to the meeting
- (3) The Chair welcomed Ms Suzanna Chisholm, Building Safety Team Lead to the meeting.

34. Minutes – 14 October 2021

(Item A4)

- (a) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 14 October 2021, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35. Minutes of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee – 14 October 2021

(Item A5)

- (a) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee held on 14 October 2021, be noted.

36. External Auditors Annual Report for 2020/21

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

- (1) The Authority considered a report which informed that the evaluation and report requirement of the annual Value for Money Assessment was changing this year and as such, the Authority's external auditors, are no longer required to give a qualified/unqualified opinion on the VFM conclusion. Instead, the auditors are required to report in more detail on the Authority's overall arrangements, as well as highlight any key recommendations on significant weakness identified during the Audit as set out under the National Audit Office Code of Practice.
- (2) The Authority considered the first external auditors annual report of its kind, taking into consideration the changes already mentioned in relation to value for money. It was

pleasing to report that the external auditors' identification of only one suggested improvement is particularly good when compared to other authorities of a similar standing.

- (3) Mr Chard acknowledged the great work undertaken by the National Procurement Hub which is a collaboration project for procurement nationally, and is led by the Chief Executive of KFRS. To date this project has saved £36m.
- (4) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the External Auditors' Annual Audit Report, attached at **Appendix 1**, be approved;
 - (b) the contents of the report be noted.

37. Financial Update for 2021/22

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

- (1) The Authority considered a report which set out the latest forecast outturns against the revenue budget of £71.573m and the revised capital budget of £2.871m for the 2021/22 financial year, a proposal for the use of the 2021/22 revenue budget underspend as well as a number of other financial updates.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the final revenue budget underspend be transferred to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve and the Insurance and Resource Reserve, with the final allocations to each reserve being formally agreed by the Authority at a later date, be approved in principle;
 - (b) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

38. Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2022/23 and Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-26

(Item B3 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered a report setting out proposals for its Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax levels for 2022/23; the assumptions used in developing the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2022-26; the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy and related Prudential Indicators; the Reserves Strategy and Capital Strategy. The report built on information presented to the Authority at its meeting on 14 October 2021.
- (2) In addition, the Authority was presented with an Addendum which proposed an amendment to recommendation one within the report as a result of the final Business Rates figures being received from Medway Council.
- (3) Mr Chard, on behalf of the Authority, placed on record its thanks to the Director, Finance and Corporate Services and her team on the excellent management of the Authority's finances.
- (4) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the revenue budget proposals and the resulting net revenue budget requirement of £77.429m for 2022/23, as detailed in the Addendum to the report, be approved;
 - (b) a total requirement from Council Tax of £53.637m to be raised through the precept to meet the 2022/23 revenue budget requirement, which requires a Council Tax increase of 1.89%, resulting in the following annual charges for each Council Tax band as detailed below, be approved;

| Council Tax Band | Annual Charge |
|------------------|---------------|
| A | £54.90 |
| B | £64.05 |
| C | £73.20 |
| D | £82.35 |
| E | £100.65 |
| F | £118.95 |
| G | £137.25 |
| H | £164.70 |

- (c) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make any adjustments which may be required to the net revenue budget, arising as a result of any late changes to the Council Tax, Business Rates or Government Funding, be approved;
- (d) the Capital Budget of £13.191m for 2022/23 and related expenditure commitments following on in later years, together with the sources of funding identified to fund the expenditure, detailed in **Appendix 1**, be approved;
- (e) the Capital Strategy, attached as **Appendix 2**, be approved;
- (f) the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, including the appropriate Prudential Indicators, attached at **Appendix 3**, be approved;
- (g) the Reserves Strategy, as attached at **Appendix 4**, be approved;
- (h) the assumptions used to develop the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2022-26, be approved.

39. Outcome of Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2022

(Item B4 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered a report detailing the outcomes of the Safety and Wellbeing Plan which ran for public consultation from 22 October 2021 to 14 January 2022.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the Authority's base requirement for fire engines on a day to day basis be reset at between 32 and 44, as set out in the Plan, be approved;
 - (b) the concept of flexible resourcing, giving a resilience pool to call up when required, of between five to 10 additional fire engines per weekday, as set out in the plan, be adopted;
 - (c) the outcomes of the consultation process, be noted.

40. Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 and Governance Issues

(Item B5 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, which the Authority is required by the Localism Act 2011 to publish before the start of the new financial year.
- (2) Mr Chard, on behalf of the Authority, acknowledged the complexities surrounding the ongoing pension issues and thanked officers for their hard work behind the scenes in trying to seek a resolution.
- (3) In response to a request made by Mr Simkins with regards to Members being kept up to date with any pension changes, Director Finance and Corporate Services responded by saying that she will provide an update on any changes to the situation either at the next meeting of the Authority or before if this is possible. The Chief Executive added that should Members receive any pension queries direct then these should be forwarded to the officers already involved in the pension discussions who will be able to assist in providing answers.
- (4) In response to a query raised by Mr Manion around safeguarding training for Members, the Director for Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety confirmed that Members will be provided with this training in the near future.
- (5) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, attached at **Appendix 1**, be approved;
 - (b) the Integrated Learning and Assurance Model (ILAM), attached at **Appendix 2**, be approved;
 - (c) the Equality Inclusion and Diversity Policy, attached at **Appendix 3**, be approved;
 - (d) the Closed Circuit Television Policy, attached at **Appendix 4**, be approved;
 - (e) the Safeguarding Policy, attached at **Appendix 5**, be approved;
 - (f) the Social Value Policy, attached at **Appendix 6**, be approved;
 - (g) the Social Media Policy, attached at **Appendix 7**, be approved;
 - (h) the Customer Feedback Policy, attached at **Appendix 8**, be approved;
 - (i) the Emergency Planning and Contingencies Policy, attached at **Appendix 9**, be approved;
 - (j) the amendment to the Automatic Fire Alarms Policy, attached at **Appendix 10**, be approved;
 - (k) the updated Publication Scheme, be approved;
 - (l) the Pensions Update, be noted.

41. Appointment of External Auditors

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

- (1) The Authority considered a report which set out options for the appointment of its external auditors for a five year period from 2023/24 and when the current contract expires.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the Public Sector Audit Appointments invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors for five financial years with effect from the 1 April 2023, be approved.

42. Review of Member Allowances and Adoption of the Allowances Scheme for Members'

(Item B7 - Report by Clerk to the Authority)

- (1) Members considered the report by the Authority's Independent Person on the review of its Member allowances and recommendations contained within it. The Authority is legally required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to review its Scheme at least once every four years. The Independent Person, as part of the review, took into consideration the recommendations made to Kent County Council and Medway Council by their Independent Remuneration Panels following recent reviews of both their Schemes.
- (2) The Authority also considered the change in the membership of its Audit and Governance Committee.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the recommendations of the review as detailed in **Appendix 1** to the report, be approved;
 - (b) the Member Allowances Scheme as set out in **Appendix 2**, to the report, be approved;
 - (c) the proposals for a more comprehensive review of Members Allowances once further detail is known around the implications of the White Paper, be approved;
 - (d) the membership of the Authority's Audit and Governance Committee, be noted.

43. The Changing Landscape of Fire Safety Legislation

(Item C1 – Presentation by the Building Safety Team Lead)

- (1) The Authority received a presentation on the key changes within Fire Safety legislation and the work that is being undertaken by the Building Safety Team to incorporate these.
- (2) Following a discussion on Lithium-ion batteries, Mr Scott offered to share with the Authority research he has undertaken on incidents involving e-scooters.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) Members gave thanks to the Building Safety Team Lead for the presentation;
 - (b) the presentation on the changing landscape of fire safety legislation, be noted.

44. Information Update

(Item C2 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered information updates on:-
 - A. Pandemic Update;
 - B. Inspection and National Issues Update;
 - C. Performance Update;
 - D. Operational Update;
 - E. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update;
 - F. Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme Update;
 - G. Traffic Calming Zone Update;
 - H. Insurance Update;
 - I. Significant Safety Event Protocol;

J. Pensions Board Update.

(2) RESOLVED that:

(a) the contents of the report, and subsequent discussions, be noted.

At the close of the meeting, Mr Chard, on behalf of the Authority, recorded thanks to the Senior Team and all staff within KFRS for their continued hard work and support.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

HEARINGS PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of a Hearings Panel of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held virtually on Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 27, April 2022.

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

APOLOGIES:- Mr D Daley

OFFICERS:- Director Finance and Corporate Services, Ms A Kilpatrick; Assistant Director, People and Learning, Mrs K Irvine and Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chair of the Panel

- (1) Mr Maple proposed Mr Chard, Mr Harman seconded.
- (2) RESOLVED that, Mr Chard be elected Chair of the Panel for this Hearing.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Signing of Minutes

- (1) RESOLVED that the Chairman be authorised to sign the agreed Minutes of the Hearing.

4. Exclusion of Press and Public

- (1) RESOLVED that, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEM (Open Access to Minutes)

5. Pension Dispute – Stage 2 of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (IDRP) (Item 5 - Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)

- (1) The Panel considered information relating to an appeal against the decision taken at the Stage 1 of the IDR process. The appeal is with regards to a complaint made on the grounds that the correct due diligence was not followed by the Authority when it actioned a request from the complainant for the transfer of their pension fund into an alternative pension scheme.

- (2) In her response to the Stage 1 of the IDR process, the Assistant Director People and Learning outlined the process that was undertaken by which the decision was made to not uphold the appeal at this stage.
- (3) The Panel carefully examined all the written information presented to it, including correspondence received from the complainant registering an appeal under Stage 2 of the IDR process, the reasons for their appeal as well as additional evidence submitted by them.
- (4) The Panel, in conjunction with reviewing the written evidence, also considered the timeline of events which has led up to now. This included when the signed discharge forms were submitted by the complainant for the transfer of their pension fund to when the subsequent campaign was introduced by The Pensions Regulator raising awareness of the potential of fraudulent schemes.
- (5) The Panel also noted that if the new guidance, issued by The Pensions Regulator, was in place at the time the transfer request was made then the additional relevant checks would have been undertaken. However, at the time there was no suggestion that there were any issues with the alternative pension scheme.
- (6) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) Having very carefully considered all the written evidence submitted to it and whilst empathy was expressed by the Panel for the situation that has occurred, the Panel collectively agreed that they could not uphold the appeal at Stage 2 of the IDR process;
 - (b) The Clerk to the Authority will write to the complainant to explain the outcome of the Panel's decision.

6. Pension Dispute – Stage 2 of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (IDRP) Follow up

- (1) On 18 February 2022, the Hearings Panel considered evidence for an appeal against a decision taken at Stage 1 of the IDR process in relation to Immediate Detriment payments made under the McCloud/Sargeant ruling.
- (2) At the time, the Panel were made aware that new Finance legislation was due to be released in April 2022 which was hoped to provide some clarity with regards to the tax liability surrounding additional payments under the ruling. On this basis, the Panel agreed to review the case again once more detail was known.
- (3) Although the Finance Act 2022 does provide HM Treasury with the power to make regulations to address tax implications as a result of the McCloud remedy, any measures would require secondary legislation to be introduced and implemented before any payments can be applied. It is understood that it will be October 2023 before any payments can be made in relation to the remedy period.
- (4) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) in light of the additional information presented to it, the Panel's decision made at the Hearing on 18 February 2022 remains to not uphold the appeal;
- (b) the Pensions Manager will write to the complainant to explain the circumstances surrounding the outcome of this decision.

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By: Clerk to the Authority

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2022

Subject: REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES FOR 2022/23

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report will review the political proportionality as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and confirm the allocation of Committee places to the political groups. It will also confirm the Authority's membership of outside bodies for 2022/23 and agree the allocation of the Authority's places and votes on the Local Government Association's (LGA) General Assembly and LGA Fire Commission.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

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

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

COMMENTS

Background

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

Annual Review of Proportionality

2. The Authority is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review its scheme of proportionality at its Annual meeting each year. The Act requires that political attendance at these committees (both overall and within each Committee) is allocated in proportion to the political composition of the Authority as a whole (subject to the majority group on the Authority being entitled to have a majority on every Committee). However, the Authority may decide (on the basis that no Member votes against such a proposal), to adopt some other arrangement.

3. Since the last annual review of proportionality there has been no change in the membership of the Authority. The current composition is outlined below;

Cons: **20** Lab: **3** Lib Dem: **1** Swanscombe & Greenhithe Residents' Association: **1** and PCC

Appointment of Members to Serve on Committees

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

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

| Committee | Total | Con | Lab | LD | S&GRA |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Authority | 25 | 20 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| SOAC Committee | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Audit and Governance Committee | 10 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

6. There is one other Member body which does not have to be taken into account in the statutory review of proportionality, and that is the Hearings Panels. The role of Hearings Panel is to hear cases in relation to allegations made against any Member that may have breached the Code of Conduct and appeals by staff against certain disciplinary and pension decisions. Panels are called together as and when they are required. Members are therefore asked to agree that whenever a Hearings Panel does need to be convened, it should comprise of four Members (one drawn from each of the four parties) and where required on the nomination of the Group's Leader.

Representation on Outside Bodies

7. It is proposed that the Authority continues its representation on the LGA General Assembly and LGA Fire Commission and as such Members are asked to reconfirm the existing allocation of places and voting rights, as shown in Tables 2 and 3. Members will be aware that the Authority's appointments to the LGA General Assembly is only nominal as the Authority does not normally send any representatives to the LGA's Annual Conference (of which the General Assembly meeting forms a part).

Table 2: Appointments to the LGA General Assembly

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

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

Mr N Chard*
Mr S Tranter
(* as Chair of the Authority)

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. Members are requested to:
 - 9.1 Agree, for the purposes of the statutory annual review of proportionality, the allocation of Committee places to the political groups (Table 1 and paragraphs 2 to 5 refer);
 - 9.2 Agree the size and composition of the SOAC Committee (Table 1 and paragraph 4 refers);
 - 9.3 Agree the size and composition of the Audit and Governance Committee (Table 1 and paragraphs 5 refers);
 - 9.4 Agree that whenever a Hearings Panel needs to be convened, it should comprise of four Members (one drawn from each of the four parties) and where required on the nomination of the Group's Leader (paragraph 6 refers);
 - 9.5 Confirm the allocation of places and voting rights on the LGA General Assembly (Table 2 and paragraph 7 refers).

By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2022
Subject: FINAL PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2021/22
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report provides Members with information relating to the final provisional outturn on revenue and capital spend for 2021/22 and includes details of the proposed resultant transfer to Earmarked Reserves.

Key points to note are:

- The provisional revenue budget underspend is £1.707m against an approved budget of £71.573m for 2021/22;
- The 2021/22 capital outturn is £1.989m against the revised capital budget of £2.871m.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Agree the transfer of £1m of the final revenue budget underspend to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve (paragraph 3 refers);
2. Agree that any final underspend in excess of £1m (provisionally £707k) be transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve (paragraph 3 refers);
3. Consider and note the contents of the report.

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

COMMENTS

Provisional Revenue Budget Outturn for 2021/22

1. **Revenue Budget** - The provisional revenue budget underspend is £1.707m against an approved budget of £71.573m. This is an increase of £45k since the last reported position to Members in February 2022 (a forecast underspend of £1.662m). An adjustment will be required if the final outturn on Business Rates Section 31 grants, reported by District Councils and Medway Council (billing authorities), is materially different to the estimates provided for closing the 2021/22 accounts. Any adjustment will be offset by a corresponding transfer to or from the Government Grants Reserve so will not impact on the provisional underspend. Billing authorities have a statutory requirement to provide the final figures to the Authority by 30 June 2022.
2. **External Audit** - However, the accounts are also still subject to review by external audit and the auditor has provided the following update for Members:

“As per the audit plan, presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in April 2022, we reported our intention to commence the fieldwork for the 2021/22 financial statements audit in late June 2022 and finishing end of July 2022. Due to resourcing constraints arising from a need to prioritise completing the backlog of unfinished 2019/20 and 2020/21 local government audits we are unable to resource our work as planned. We have discussed options with management which included a partial audit in June 2022 but have agreed the best option is to move the audit to later in the year. It is therefore our intention to complete the audit in October 2022.

We thank the management team for its continued engagement and look forward to delivering our audit to the revised timetable.”

As a consequence of the audit review being delayed it will now be necessary to bring forward slightly, (currently 1 December 2022) the date of the Audit and Governance committee meeting, so that it falls at the end of November, as that is within the statutory deadline of accounts sign off period. It was originally envisaged that the external auditors review of the accounts would be presented to the September Audit and Governance meeting, but unfortunately this is now not feasible given the delay in the commencement of the audit work.

3. **Reserves** - At the February Authority meeting Members agreed to apportion the transfer of the final underspend to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve and the Insurance and Resource Reserve, with the final allocations to be confirmed once the final outturn is known. It is now proposed that £1m of the final underspend is transferred to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve and the balance (provisionally £707k) is transferred to the Insurance and Resource

Reserve. The £1m transfer to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve will provide additional funding in 2022/23 towards the cost of new posts that have been agreed since the 2022/23 budget was approved in February (such as the introduction of a new Home Fire Safety Visit Task Force and several new Building Fire Safety Inspectors) and any temporary posts that are to be funded from the reserve. The ongoing impact of establishment changes will be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) from 2023/24. The £707k transfer to the Insurance and Resource Reserve will help fund any unbudgeted pressures that arise in-year, such as higher than budgeted inflationary uplifts. (Members may recall that at the time of setting the 2021/22 budget, the government had planned to pause all public sector pay awards and as such no budget provision had been set aside to fund any award in 2021/22. However, the awards were agreed at 1.5%/1.75% in 2021 and as such the expectation was that this may need to be funded from the Resource Reserve. However, this proved not be necessary as an unexpected rate rebate going back a number of years, was received towards the latter part of 2021/22 (approx. £1m), so the majority of this was used to mitigate the in-year cost of the pay award). However, the current economic inflationary forecasts, at around 10%, may result in the need for additional funding in some budget areas, so it is likely this will be facilitated by drawing down from this reserve in 2022/23, should there be insufficient capacity to fund the inflationary pressure within year. The MTFP will reflect any ongoing requirements into the base budget from 2023/24.

4. Attached at **Appendices 1** and **3** are the subjective and functional analyses of the revenue budget and final outturn, together with explanations of the material variances at **Appendices 2** and **4**. Whilst it is clear that **Appendices 1** and **3** are in different presentational formats, it should be noted that all subjective headings (including items such as Transfers to/from Reserves) must be apportioned under one of the functional headings. This may therefore result in a heading in **Appendix 1**, such as Direct Pension costs, having a different figure to a similar heading in **Appendix 3**.
5. **Rolling Budget Reserve** - As part of the closure of accounts process, any funding to support expenditure that has been committed, but for which the relevant goods or services have not been received on or before 31 March, is identified and transferred into the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund the commitment in the following year. In addition, the Authority was holding higher levels of stocks of some operational equipment and smoke alarms at the end of the financial year, so it has been necessary to put through a stock adjustment at year-end, meaning a corresponding amount has been rolled in the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund the expenditure which will be recognised in the accounts in the following year. At the end of the year, £710k was transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund commitments made in 2021/22, but where the associated costs would not be incurred or recognised (stock adjustments) until after 31 March 2022. During the year, £917k was transferred from the reserve to fund expenditure committed in 2020/21 but not incurred until 2021/22, making the net movement a decrease on the Rolling Budget Reserve of £207k for 2021/22.

6. The largest items included within the Rolling Budget Reserve closing balance of £867k are; £263k for operational equipment (includes a £236k stock adjustment); £244k for premises works delayed due to the impact of Covid-19; £75k for staff training that had not been completed due to Covid-19 delays and; £56k for repairs to damaged water hydrants where works have been requested but had not been completed by the water companies by the end of the financial year. A number of other individually minor items across the non-pay budgets, total £229k.

Capital Budget Outturn for 2021/22 and the Infrastructure Plan

7. The final capital outturn is £1.989m against the revised capital budget of £2.871m. Details of the Infrastructure Plan (including the Capital Budget) and the most significant variances are attached at **Appendices 5 and 6**.

General and Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2022

8. Details of the final year-end balances on reserves and capital receipts are shown at **Appendix 7**.
9. **General Reserves** - The policy for 2021/22, as agreed by Members, was to maintain the General Reserve balance at approximately 5% of the base revenue budget. In line with this requirement, the General Reserve position as at 31 March 2022 has increased by £50k to £3.760m.
10. **Earmarked Reserves** - Earmarked reserves at the start of the financial year were £38.221m and, after year-end net transfers to reserves, including the £1.707m underspend detailed above, the provisional balance at the end of the financial year is £37.561m.
11. **Capital Receipts** - the year opened with a balance of £7.875m and there were sales of 3 properties during 2021/22, as well as a plot of land. There was no requirement to utilise capital receipts to fund any capital expenditure in 2021/22 so the closing balance for the year was £9.470m.

Other Finance Related Issues

12. **Government Grants** - In 2021/22, the Authority received £9.892m of revenue grants, outside of the core Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). As in previous years these grants included; funding for New Dimensions and New Threats related work £1.057m; the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) £18k; due to an error in the Home Office calculation of the Firelink grant, an overpayment in 2020/21 was recovered in 2021/22, so the grant was reduced to £548k (2020/21 £624k); small business rate relief grant of £1.292m and; a grant towards the additional cost due to increased employer pension contribution rates of £3.536m. The Office of the Rail Regulator paid £51k towards the cost of work carried out by the Authority for

the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority; £48k was drawn down from the apprenticeship levy and; £8k was received towards the cost of complying with the Transparency Code.

13. In addition, the Authority received; a grant of £480k to further bolster protection activity; a grant of £94k towards the administrative costs of implementing the remedy for the McCloud/Sargeant pension case; a grant of £1.585m to compensate the Authority for lost business rates income as a result of the additional retail and hospitality reliefs granted by the Government for 2021/22; a grant of £115k to cover additional costs incurred as a result of Covid-19; a grant of £956k towards lost Council Tax income due to Covid-19; a grant of £14k to fund additional audit costs following recommendations of the Redmond Review and; grants totalling £90k in relation to Road Safety activity.

Firefighters' Pension Fund 2021/22

14. Attached at **Appendix 8** is the final outturn for the Firefighters' Pension Fund for 2021/22.
15. Slightly fewer retirements than anticipated in 2021/22 means that the top-up grant requirement has reduced by £676k compared to the amount that was forecast when the Home Office return was submitted in September 2021.
16. The 2021/22 unaudited return was submitted to the Home Office in May and payment of the balance of the deficit in the fund, totalling £5.871m, is expected in July, along with 80% of the estimated top-up grant requirement for 2022/23.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

17. Of the final provisional underspend on the revenue budget, £1m will be transferred to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve to help fund staffing costs for posts that have been agreed since the 2022/23 budget was approved in February (where these posts are permanent funding will be added to the base budget requirement in the MTFP from 2023/24). The balance of the underspend (provisionally £707k) will be transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve to fund any unbudgeted pressures that arise in-year, such as higher than budgeted inflationary uplifts.
18. Resources have been rolled forward to fund any revenue commitments and capital expenditure that has been re-phased to later years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. Members are requested to:

19.1 Agree the transfer of £1m of the final revenue budget underspend to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve (paragraph 3 refers);

19.2 Agree that any final underspend in excess of £1m (provisionally £707k) be transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve (paragraph 3 refers);

19.3 Consider and note the contents of the report.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2021/22 Revenue Budget – Subjective Analysis

| Figures shown are in £'000 | Revised Budget £'000 | Outturn £'000 | Total Variance £'000 |
|--|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Salaries, allowances and on-costs | 63,658 | 62,259 | -1,399 |
| Training expenses | 757 | 581 | -176 |
| Other employee costs (incl. insurance) | 776 | 477 | -299 |
| Direct pension costs | 1,871 | 2,473 | 602 |
| Total Employee Costs | 67,062 | 65,790 | -1,272 |
| Repairs, maintenance & other costs | 3,571 | 2,336 | -1,235 |
| Utility costs | 2,272 | 1,307 | -965 |
| Total Premises Costs | 5,843 | 3,643 | -2,200 |
| Vehicle running costs | 2,290 | 2,329 | 39 |
| Travel allowances and expenses | 88 | 26 | -62 |
| Total Transport Costs | 2,378 | 2,355 | -23 |
| Equipment and supplies | 2,621 | 2,251 | -370 |
| Fees and services | 1,376 | 1,512 | 136 |
| Communications and computing | 4,120 | 3,433 | -687 |
| Other supplies and services | 620 | 578 | -42 |
| Total Supplies and Services | 8,737 | 7,774 | -963 |
| Capital financing costs | 1,025 | 1,024 | -1 |
| Revenue contributions to Capital | 2,871 | 1,989 | -882 |
| Total Capital Financing | 3,896 | 3,013 | -883 |
| Grants and contributions | -8,352 | -9,996 | -1,644 |
| Investment income | -45 | -82 | -37 |
| Other income | -269 | -314 | -45 |
| Transfers from reserves | -7,677 | -2,317 | 5,360 |
| Total Income | -16,343 | -12,709 | 3,634 |
| Net Budget | 71,573 | 69,866 | -1,707 |

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

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Net transfer from reserves as per outturn detailed above | -2,317 |
| Net budget variance (underspend) as detailed above | 1,707 |
| Total net transfer from revenue reserves as per Appendix 7 | -610 |

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Significant Variances and Movements in the 2021/22 Revenue Budget

The net underspend of £1.707m is made up of a variety of over and underspends, but it also reflects areas of spend that may need to be slipped to a future year because the service or activity has not taken place in the year for which funding was set aside. Hence, the necessary funding will be adjusted against the relevant reserve. The main reasons for the most significant variances are commented on below: -

Subjective Variance Analysis

- (a) **Salaries, allowances and on-costs (£1.399m Underspend)** - The final underspend on pay budget headings has increased by £160k compared to the forecast position reported to Members at the Authority meeting in February 2022 (£1.239m). Further explanations for the most significant pay variances are provided under the relevant functional heading in the Functional Variance Analysis at **Appendix 4**.
- (b) **Training expenses (£176k Underspend)** - The base budget for staff training underspent by £196k mainly due to the impact of Covid-19 halting a number of courses. As such, £75k of this underspend is offset by a transfer to the Rolling Budget Reserve for use in 2022/23. There was a £20k overspend against grant funded training budgets so this is offset by a transfer from the Government Grants Reserve.
- (c) **Other Employee Costs (£299k Underspend)** - This underspend mainly relates to the reversal of £171k of unused insurance provisions which are no longer required as the costs in relation to the provisions have now been settled. In addition, there was an underspend of £114k on non-pay employee related budgets such as costs in relation to occupational health referrals. Other minor net underspends total £14k.
- (d) **Direct Pension Costs (£602k Overspend)** - Additional ill-health retirements and an increase in unabated pensions have resulted in additional contributions to the Firefighters Pension Fund this year. There have also been a number of LGPS pension strain costs agreed this year, some of which are as a result of supporting flexible retirements to aid succession planning.
- (e) **Repairs, maintenance and other costs (£1.235m Underspend)** - The majority of this underspend (£892k) relates to major property works that have slipped to 2022/23 due to Covid-19 related issues so is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve. Additionally, £244k relates to day-to-day property maintenance works that have slipped to 2022/23 so is offset by a transfer to the Rolling Budget Reserve. Other minor net underspends total £99k.

- (f) **Utility costs (£965k Underspend)** - A one-off saving of £1.003m was achieved in 2021/22 as a result of backdated business rates refunds following a review of rateable values of fire stations. This was partly offset by an overspend on electricity costs due to a significant increase in prices.
- (g) **Travel Allowances & Expenses (£62k Underspend)** - As a result of Covid-19 restrictions and changes in working patterns, lower staff travel expenses have been incurred in 2021/22.
- (h) **Equipment and supplies (£370k Underspend)** - Equipment stock adjustments totalling £236k have been put through this financial year, due to the material amount of smoke alarms and operational equipment being held at year-end. This has increased the underspend on equipment costs but is offset by a transfer to the Rolling Budget Reserve. There were also underspends on; office equipment related expenditure £35k, the clothing and workwear budgets £33k; replacement of fitness equipment £28k and; other minor underspends totalling £38k.
- (i) **Fees & Services (£136k Overspend)** - Additional expertise was sought in relation to a number of legal matters resulting in an overspend of £118k. Other minor overspends total £18k.
- (j) **Communications and computing (£687k Underspend)** - Some of this underspend (£337k) relates to major IT projects, such as; the Time and Attendance System project (£228k); the Network Upgrade project (£44k); the Digital Experience Platform project (£43k) and; other minor net underspends (£22k), where expenditure has slipped to 2022/23 so is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve. In addition, some of the protection uplift funding has been used to fund a proportion of the building safety licence fees for 2021/22 resulting in a one-off saving of £219k against the base budget this year. Slippage on the Customer and Premises Risk Management project and the Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) project has led to a further underspend of £96k, arising as a result of issues in relation to software licences. Other minor net underspends total £35k.
- (k) **Revenue Contributions to Capital (£882k Underspend)** - There was a reduced requirement for revenue financing towards capital expenditure due to slippage on the capital budget. This is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve for the same amount.
- (l) **Grants and contributions (£1.644m Additional Income)** - The Authority accounted for several unbudgeted grants in 2021/22. The first of these grants covers the cost of the additional business rates reliefs granted by the Government for 2021/22 amounting to £1.585m (offset by a transfer to the Government Grants Reserve), and the second is to cover additional costs incurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, totalling £115k. This is slightly offset by the recovery of the overpayment of the 2020/21 Firelink grant by the Home Office (see paragraph 12).

(m) **Transfers to Reserves (£5.360m Reduced net transfer from reserves)** - Transfers from the Infrastructure Reserve have reduced by a net £2.257m, which is primarily explained in (e), (j) and (k). An unbudgeted transfer of £1.585m has been made to the Government Grant Reserve (see (l)). Due to the level of unexpected one-off underspends and additional income received in 2021/22, the £744k budgeted draw down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve, to fund the 2021/22 pay award, has not been required. An additional; £620k has been transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve, primarily explained in (b), (e) and (h) and; other adjustments to various other reserves total £154k.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2021/22 Revenue Budget – Functional Analysis

| Figures shown are in £'000 | Revised Budget £'000 | Outturn £'000 | Total Variance £'000 |
|---|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Firefighting and Rescue Services | 33,101 | 32,616 | -485 |
| Control | 2,152 | 1,928 | -224 |
| Operational Policy and Resilience | 3,893 | 4,330 | 437 |
| Fleet and Transport | 2,847 | 2,884 | 37 |
| Total Operational Response and Resilience | 41,993 | 41,758 | -235 |
| Customer Safety | 2,901 | 2,636 | -265 |
| Business Safety | 2,501 | 2,084 | -417 |
| Customer Engagement | 1,045 | 1,024 | -21 |
| Total Customer, Business Safety and Engagement | 6,447 | 5,744 | -703 |
| Corporate Management and Business Support Team | 2,188 | 2,181 | -7 |
| Member Allowances and Expenses | 82 | 76 | -6 |
| People and Learning | 6,179 | 5,829 | -350 |
| Business Change and Information Technology | 5,707 | 5,085 | -622 |
| Property, Environment and Facilities | 6,100 | 4,058 | -2,042 |
| Finance, Insurance and Procurement | 1,713 | 2,353 | 640 |
| Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance | 682 | 721 | 39 |
| Total Corporate Teams | 22,651 | 20,303 | -2,348 |
| Pension Cost | 1,871 | 2,473 | 602 |
| Net Financing Costs | 980 | 942 | -38 |
| Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves | 844 | 2,256 | 1,412 |
| Non-Ring Fenced Grants | -3,326 | -3,724 | -398 |
| Admin for Council Tax Support | 113 | 114 | 1 |
| Total Pensions, Financing and Other Costs | 482 | 2,061 | 1,579 |
| Net Budget | 71,573 | 69,866 | -1,707 |

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 £1.707m 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

- (n) **Firefighting and Rescue Services (£485k Underspend)** - The majority of this underspend relates to pay budgets. The pay budget for on-call fire stations has underspent by £1.014m mainly due to lower levels of operational activity payments than anticipated following a change in contractual arrangements from April 2021. This is partly offset by an overspend on pay budgets for whole-time fire stations of £435k where stations have been running over establishment for example, to cover long term absences. Other minor non-pay variances total £94k.
- (o) **Control (£224k Underspend)** - This underspend is entirely pay budget related and has materialised due to an average of 5 vacancies within the team throughout the year, although these vacancies have now been filled.
- (p) **Operational Policy and Resilience (£437k Overspend)** - This overspend is mainly pay related due to a combination of staff covering long-term absences, Covid-19 related shortfalls and periods of overlap following a significant in-year restructure. In addition, there has been an £87k increased cost against the professional services and the legal fees budget.
- (q) **Customer Safety (£265k Underspend)** - This underspend is mainly pay related due to difficulties in recruiting to vacant positions during the year, though the majority of these posts have now been filled.
- (r) **Business Safety (£417k Underspend)** - See (j) in relation to Building Safety licence fees (£219k). In addition, pay budgets have underspent due to difficulties in recruiting to vacant positions during the year, though the majority of these posts have now been filled.
- (s) **People and Learning (£350k Underspend)** - The majority of this variance is explained in (b) and (c) in relation to non-pay employee related budgets.
- (t) **Business Change & Information Technology (£622k Underspend)** - see (j) regarding slippage on the Customer and Premises Risk Management project and the Mobile Data

Terminals project (£96k); Time and Attendance project (£228k) and; Network Upgrade project (£44k). The remaining underspend (£254k) relates to pay budgets due to difficulties in recruiting to vacancies during the year, though the majority of these posts have now been filled.

- (u) **Property, Environment and Facilities (£2.042m Underspend)** - see (e) regarding slippage of major property works (£892k) and other minor net underspends (£99k) and (f) regarding the utility underspend (£965k). In-year vacancies have resulted in pay underspends of £86k.
- (v) **Finance, Insurance and Procurement (£640k Overspend)** - see (c) regarding unused insurance provisions (£171k) and (m) regarding the draw down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve for the 2021/22 pay awards (£744k). The variance is reported against this functional heading as any transfers to or from the Insurance and Resource Reserve are reported here i.e. the budget has been adjusted to reflect a transfer from the Insurance and Resource Reserve but the draw down from the reserve has not been put through (for the reasons explained in paragraph 3). Other minor net overspends total £67k.
- (w) **Pension Costs (£602k Overspend)** - see (d).
- (x) **Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves (£1.412m Increased Transfer)** - see (k) regarding the reduced requirement for revenue contributions towards capital spend and (m) regarding Infrastructure Reserve transfers. Other net reserve adjustments total £153k.
- (y) **Non-Ring-Fenced Grants (£398k Additional Funding)** - This mainly relates to Covid-19 grant funding released from reserves to fund Covid-19 related expenditure incurred in 2021/22.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2021/22 Infrastructure Budget Outturn

Figures shown are in £'000

| | Revised Budget £'000 | Outturn £'000 | Total Variance £'000 |
|---|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Infrastructure Capital Budget | | | |
| Ashford Fire Station | 366 | 284 | -82 |
| Total Station Development Programme | 366 | 284 | -82 |
| Roofing Works | | | |
| Roofing Works | 600 | 98 | -502 |
| Boilers | | | |
| Boilers | 17 | 25 | 8 |
| Total Premises | 617 | 123 | -494 |
| Mobile Data Terminals | | | |
| Mobile Data Terminals | 338 | 190 | -148 |
| Total Information and Communication Systems | 338 | 190 | -148 |
| Appliances | | | |
| Appliances | 678 | 673 | -5 |
| Specialist Units and Vehicles | | | |
| Specialist Units and Vehicles | 302 | 158 | -144 |
| Cars and Vans | | | |
| Cars and Vans | 570 | 561 | -9 |
| Total Vehicles and Equipment | 1,550 | 1,392 | -158 |
| Total Infrastructure Capital Budget | 2,871 | 1,989 | -882 |
| Infrastructure Revenue Budget | | | |
| Premises | 1,331 | 439 | -892 |
| Equipment | 59 | 37 | -22 |
| Information and Comms. Systems | 1,209 | 872 | -337 |
| Total Infrastructure Revenue Budget | 2,599 | 1,348 | -1,251 |
| Total Infrastructure Revenue and Capital Budgets | 5,470 | 3,337 | -2,133 |
| Funded from:- | | | |
| Base Revenue Contributions | -3,792 | -3,792 | 0 |
| Infrastructure Reserve | -1,432 | 825 | 2,257 |
| One-off funding & grants | -246 | -370 | -124 |
| Total Funding | -5,470 | -3,337 | 2,133 |

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2021/22 Infrastructure Budget Outturn

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

Infrastructure Capital Budget

- (a) **Roofing Works** - Works have been delayed at several fire stations to due delays in securing a contractor to carry out the work, so expenditure has slipped to 2022/23.
- (b) **Mobile Data Terminals** – Whilst the installation of the MDT and companion devices is now complete, work continues in relation to the development of the MDT software. There have also been delays in securing a contractor to install the new cradlepoint aerial system, both of which have resulted in the lower level of funding incurred in this year against the project, resulting in the slippage of resources to 2022/23.
- (c) **Specialist Unit and Vehicles** - The delivery timeframe for vehicle chassis' is now longer than previously anticipated so expenditure on the ladder truck replacement and the prime mover vehicle replacements has slipped to 2022/23.

Infrastructure Revenue Budget

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

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
2021/22 Revenue and Capital Reserve Balances

| Figures shown are in £'000 | | Opening Balance 01-Apr-21 | Net Transfers 2021/22 | Closing Balance 31-Mar-22 |
|---|-----|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| General Reserve | (A) | 3,710 | 50 | 3,760 |
| <i>Earmarked Reserves:</i> | | | | |
| Government Grants | (B) | 5,615 | -2,401 | 3,214 |
| Infrastructure | (C) | 27,045 | 825 | 27,870 |
| Insurance and Resource* | (C) | 3,585 | 731 | 4,316 |
| Rolling Budgets | (C) | 1,074 | -207 | 867 |
| Service Transformation and Productivity** | (C) | 902 | 392 | 1,294 |
| Total Earmarked Reserves | | 38,221 | -660 | 37,561 |
| Total Revenue Reserves | | 41,931 | -610 | 41,321 |
| Capital Receipts | (D) | 7,875 | 1,595 | 9,470 |
| Total Capital Reserves | | 7,875 | 1,595 | 9,470 |
| Total Usable Reserves | | 49,806 | 985 | 50,791 |

* Includes a transfer of £707k from the 2021/22 revenue budget underspend

** Includes a transfer of £1m from the 2021/22 revenue budget underspend

Notes:

- A. Reserve held to provide a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected costs
- B. Resource provided by Government with any unspent amounts rolled forward
- C. Reserve held to smooth the impact of expenditure on the revenue budget
- D. Reserve available to fund capital expenditure (although the flexibility to use capital receipts to meet the revenue costs of transformation has been extended to the financial year beginning 1 April 2024)

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2021/22 Firefighters' Pension Fund

| Figures shown are in £'000 | Original Budget Estimate (Sep 2020) | Home Office Return (Aug 2021) | Outturn | Variance (Home Office Return) |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|----------------|--|
| Pensions Outgoings: | | | | |
| Pension payments | 22,549 | 27,363 | 26,898 | -465 |
| Transfer values paid out | 0 | 0 | 13 | 13 |
| Total Expenditure | 22,549 | 27,363 | 26,911 | -452 |
| Pension Income: | | | | |
| Employee contributions | -3,683 | -3,751 | -3,866 | -115 |
| Employer contributions | -8,276 | -8,393 | -8,462 | -69 |
| In-year ill-health charge income | -306 | -273 | -350 | -77 |
| Income for pensions not abated | -91 | -194 | -153 | 41 |
| Transfer values received | 0 | -51 | -55 | -4 |
| Government top-up grant | -10,193 | -14,701 | -14,025 | 676 |
| Total Income | -22,549 | -27,363 | -26,911 | 452 |
| Net Pension Fund Expenditure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| 2021/22 Top-up grant deficit | £'000 |
|--|---------------|
| Top-up grant requirement – 2021/22 outturn | -14,025 |
| Top-up grant received July 2020 (80% of Sept. 2020 estimate) | 8,154 |
| Top-up grant deficit for 2021/22 | -5,871 |

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By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2022
Subject: FINANCIAL UPDATE 2022/23
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

Whilst it is still relatively early in the 2022/23 financial year, this report is the first for the 2022/23 financial year and as such it provides a summary update regarding the revenue and capital budgets as well as a number of other financial related issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Agree in principle to the potential draw down of reserves to meet in-year pressures, if the additional funding needed cannot be met from the resources within the existing base budget (paragraph 3 refers);
2. Agree to the authorisation criteria for signing land and building documentation under seal (paragraph 6 refers);
3. Note the Special Severance Payment approval limits (paragraph 9 refers);
4. Note the position with regard to progressing Immediate Detriment (paragraph 10 refers);
5. Note the contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Director, Finance Corporate Services – Alison Kilpatrick

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EMAIL: Alison.kilpatrick@kent.fire-uk.org

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Budgets for 2022/23

1. **Revenue Budget** - On 18 February 2022 Members agreed a net revenue budget of £77.429m for 2022/23. It has since been necessary to process a number of budget adjustments, and although the budget adjustments have no effect on the overall net revenue budget of £77.429m, they will have an impact on the Functional and Subjective analysis of the budget. Notable changes include:
 - A net reduction of £4.439m in Revenue Contributions to Capital due to slippage on the capital budget, primarily due to longer than anticipated lead times for the delivery of fire appliance chassis. This is offset by a reduced budgeted transfer from the Infrastructure Reserve.
 - A net £575k increase to various non-Infrastructure budgets where day-to-day expenditure has slipped (mainly from 2021/22 to 2022/23). This is offset by an increased budgeted transfer from the Rolling Budget Reserve.
 - A net £730k increase to various budgets where revenue expenditure on the Infrastructure Plan has slipped (mainly from 2021/22 to 2022/23). This is offset by an increased budgeted transfer from the Infrastructure Reserve.
 - A £40k increase in the budget for smoke alarms due to a significant increase in unit costs. This is offset by an increased budgeted transfer from the Insurance and Resource Reserve.
 - A £189k increase in pay budgets to cover the costs of various temporary positions (mainly within the Customer Safety and Building Safety teams) that have been agreed for 2022/23. This is offset by an increased budgeted transfer from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve.

2. **Revenue Outturn Forecast** - It is still very early in the financial year, so although a detailed forecast position is not presented in this report a number of areas that will be monitored closely over the coming months have been highlighted below:
 - **Inflation** – Members will no doubt be aware that inflation has continued to increase significantly since the revenue budgets were established for 2022/23, back in December 2021. The recent letter from the Governor of the Bank of England to the Chancellor of the Exchequer identifies that they expect the Consumer price (CPI) index to be over 9% during the next few months, rising to just above 11% in October 2022. That is double that of a year ago. Part of the rise is due to recent global events, but other factors such as the labour market and pricing strategies of companies also has a role to play. The sharp rise in global energy and tradeable goods has having a significant impact on UK

households and company profits. The impact of the rise in costs is also being felt by this organisation too, with increased costs / prices arising across a number of areas, such as fuel, smoke alarms, build prices, vehicle repairs etc, some increasing by as much as 25%, but utility prices likely to increase by way in excess of that, potentially 70% or more. Provisions set aside in the 2022/23 budget may not be sufficient to meet frontline demands. It is likely therefore that additional funds may need to be drawn down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve during the year to fund any significant cost increases that cannot be contained within existing budget allocations. As such it is always prudent to ensure an appropriate level of reserves are set aside to underpin such volatilities, to ensure frontline line service delivery continues to remain sustainable at the desired level over the medium term. Any ongoing base impact will be reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from 2023/24.

- **Pay awards in 2022/23** - The budget includes provision for a 3% pay award for all staff groups in 2022/23. A 1% pay award equates to a cost of around £650k, so if pay awards settle higher or lower than the 3% that has been set aside it will have an impact on the 2022/23 revenue budget outturn. If pay awards were to settle higher than 3% there may be a requirement to draw down additional funds from the Insurance and Resource Reserve.
- **Staffing budgets** - There have been a number of establishment changes agreed since the 2022/23 budget was set primarily to ensure that sufficient resources are in place to support service delivery and project requirements, for example the introduction of a new Home Fire Safety Visit Task Force, additional Building Fire Safety Inspectors, a restructuring of the Response and Resilience team and the implementation of the new wholetime part-time contracts for firefighters. In addition, some new temporary posts have also been agreed so there may be a requirement to draw down additional funds from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve. Any ongoing impact will be reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from 2023/24.
- **Vehicle repairs and maintenance** - Due to delays in the delivery timeframe for the new appliances and pool cars it is likely that vehicle repairs and maintenance costs will be higher than expected this year. The current forecasts for inflation are also likely to have an impact on this budget so some additional funds may need to be drawn down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve in 2022/23.
- **Utilities** - The price cap is expected to rise again in October, so it is possible that the provision set aside in the 2022/23 budget is insufficient. Funds may need to be drawn down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve if price increases cannot be contained within existing budget allocations.

- **Protection funding** - In March 2022, the Government announced that a further £12m worth of protection funding would be provided to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in 2022/23. This funding is intended to further increase the capability and capacity within fire protection. The total amount is £2m less than the amount allocated to FRAs in 2021/22 but the amount allocated for the Authority for 2022/23 has not yet been confirmed.
 - **Business Rates grants** - An amount of £1.529m is budgeted to be released from Government Grant Reserves in 2022/23 to offset the Business Rates Collection Fund deficits. If the final Section 31 Grant due to the Authority differs to this amount this will impact on the 2022/23 outturn. The draft figure provided to the Authority for closing the 2021/22 accounts is £1.585m. Billing authorities are required to provide final figures to the Authority by 30 June 2022.
3. As a consequence of the increasing inflationary pressures currently being seen and experienced in the economic environment, and the need to continue to resource frontline activity, it is highly likely that there may need to be a drawdown of reserves to meet in-year additional funding pressures. Consequently, Members are asked to agree in principle, to this draw down, should the need arise. However, if appropriate to do so, consideration will also be given to existing base budgets to determine whether it is possible to re-align some or all of a specific budget in-year to meet in-year pressures. However, Members can be assured that should this need arise, this will be reported at the earliest possible opportunity to the next meeting of the Authority, so Members are kept updated on the position.
 4. **Capital Budget** - In February Members agreed a capital budget of £13.191m for 2022/23, with £7.974m of this total being spent on vehicles and appliances, and £4.360m on the Live Fire refurbishment at Ashford station. The remaining budget was earmarked for; other minor property works (£272k); the Control location move (£300k) and the rollout of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) (£285k).
 5. However, the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Programme (VERP) is now highlighting that it is unlikely that a number of front line appliances will be delivered this year. This is due to the timeframe for delivery of the chassis' increasing further, and they are now expected to take between 12 – 18 months to be delivered and as a result, £4.708m has been slipped to 2023/24. In addition, budgets totalling £526k for pool cars and vans, and £699k for other specialist vehicles have been slipped to 2023/24 primarily due to longer lead times for delivery. This is partly offset by an increase in budgets where some expenditure has slipped from 2021/22 to 2022/23 totalling £920k (of which; £600k relates to property roofing repairs where the order was not placed until March 2022; £178k relates to the replacement of pool cars and specialist vehicles and £142k relates to the Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) project). Additionally, a £500k budget for the replacement water safety vehicles has been brought forward from 2023/24 to 2022/23 as the lead time for delivery has reduced.

Finally, the budget for the Printers project has been increased by £52k due to revised requirements (albeit offset by annual revenue savings) and other minor adjustments have increased the budget by a further £22k. These changes have resulted in a net reduction to the 2022/23 Capital budget of £4.439m.

Other Financial Issues

6. **Delegations in relation to Land and Buildings** – One of the decisions that is clearly set out as a responsibility of the Authority is the formal agreement to dispose of any land or buildings where the value exceeds £100k and to agree any purchase of land or buildings. This process has consistently been applied and as such agreements to the purchase or disposal have quite rightly been transparent and approved by the Authority as and when necessary to do so. However, once these agreements have been made there is then a requirement to ensure that the necessary delegations are in place for the signing of the deeds under seal. Consequently, these delegation levels are clearly defined in the Officers Scheme of Delegations and are as follows:

- Chair (or Vice Chair in their absence) plus one of the Chief Executive or one of the three Directors to sign and authorise land and building documents under seal.

For the purposes of transparency, Members are asked to agree to this delegation set out in the Officers scheme of Delegation.

7. **Insurance** - On 7 June 2022 the Authority's main insurers, Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company Ltd (FRIC), provided notification that the company who supply FRIC with claims handling and management services, has been placed into Administration by the High Court. The company is currently continuing to trade as normal and claims handling activities should not be affected but FRIC are currently looking at options for the future provision of these services.
8. **Capital Plan (Inflation)** - There is significant expenditure contained within the Capital programme over the coming years, with a large number of vehicle replacements and some large premises projects planned, such as the redevelopment of the Ashford station site. The current forecasts predict that inflation will continue to rise over the coming months so it is likely that costs contained within the Plan will need to be uplifted to reflect an increase in costs. But any significant changes will be brought back to the Authority for Members approval.
9. **Special Severance Payments** - In May 2022 the Government issued statutory guidance on the making and disclosure of Special Severance Payments (SSPs) by local authorities in England. The Guidance effectively sets out the criteria employers should consider before making an SSP, it provides examples of the exceptional circumstances when a SSP may be appropriate and clarifies the disclosure and reporting requirements for SSPs. Whilst the relevant policies are being updated to

reflect these changes, Members may wish to note that the guidance set out the expected authorisation requirements, for payments in the following categories:

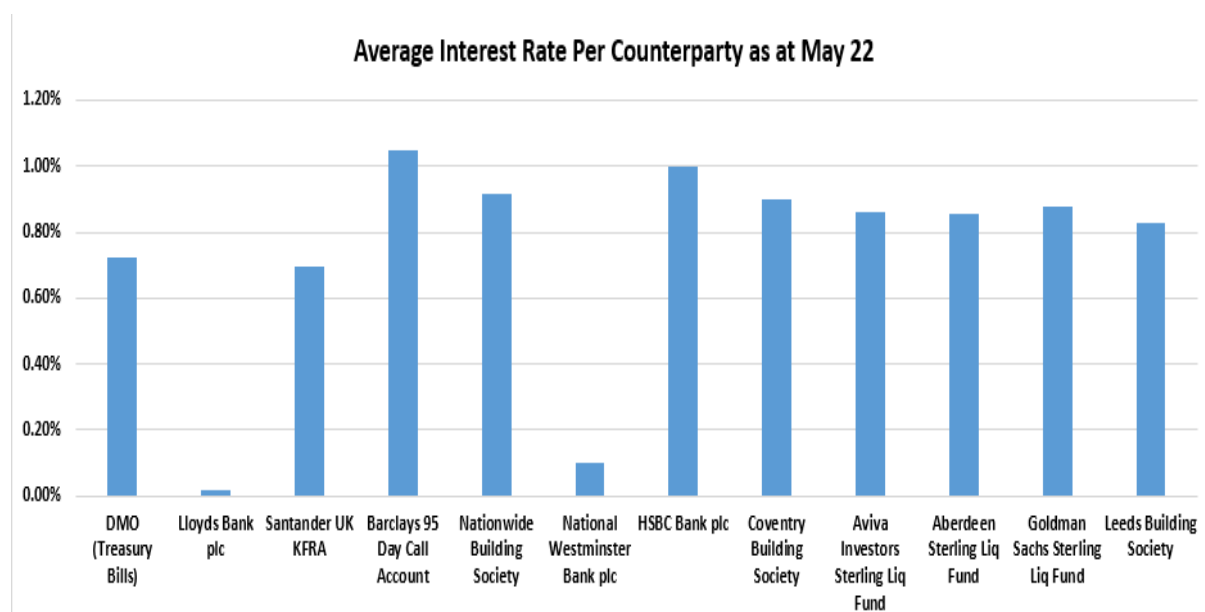
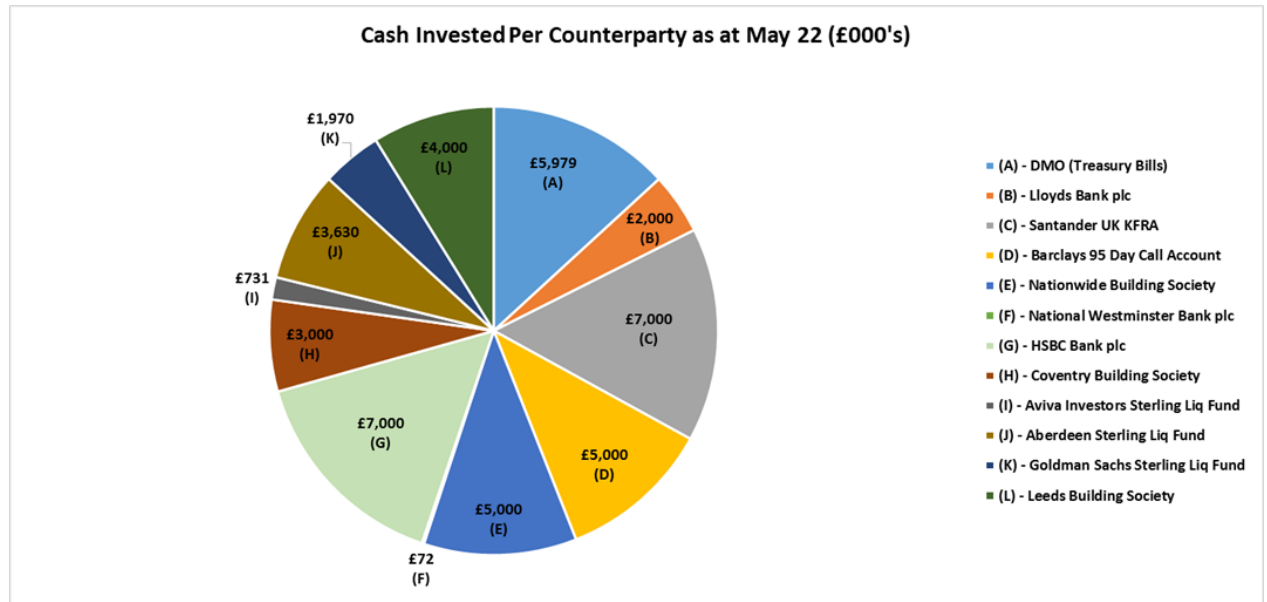
- Payments of £100k and over must be approved by the Authority;
- Payments of £20k and above, but below £100k must be approved by the Chief Executive and Chair;
- Payments below £20k must be approved in line with the Authority's Scheme of Delegations.

Furthermore, the Government has initiated a new annual collection of data on exit payments and the results will be published and made available on the gov.uk website.

10. **Pensions (Immediate Detriment)** – At the last Authority meeting in February, earlier this year, Members were updated on the latest position with regards to the Immediate Detriment (ID) issue and the Framework Memorandum of Understanding, in that it had been put on hold. As a consequence no pensions have been paid under the ID Framework, since December 2021. However, there have been continued discussions with the Local Government Association, and as a result we were able to gain some clarity on our key issues of concern. Whilst it is accepted that there may be instances when compensation payments will need to be made to individuals, around interest payments for example, which could fall on the Authority, we have now gained some clarity around the treatment of pension contributions. As such, and whilst some risks do of course remain, the scale of the risk has been significantly reduced, but inevitably it still remains a very complex issue. Given that the scale of risk has reduced significantly and being mindful of colleagues desire for us to lift the pause button on paying under ID, we have now agreed to allow retirements to be progressed under ID, albeit that retirees must sign a waiver to accept that the final pension outcome may change once both the final pension regulations and the tax treatment of payments is finally set in legislation. Additionally, we are also proposing to allow ID to be applied to those individuals affected who have already retired under existing regulations in the last 12 months. Given the punitive tax restrictions on additional payments to those having retired more than 12 months ago, we are proposing that these are not progressed under ID until such time as the tax regulations are confirmed, which we are expecting to result in the additional lump sum payments being classed as authorised and therefore not subject to additional tax charges. Members are asked to not the current position with regards to the payment of pensions under Immediate Detriment.
11. **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** - Members will be aware that at this time of the year we start to review in more detail our MTFP. Work on updating spending plans and the modelling of various funding scenarios will continue over the coming months, with proposed assumptions in the development of the MTFP presented to Members at the October Authority meeting.

Treasury Update 2022/23

12. **Treasury Management** - As at May 2022, the Authority has a cash balance of £45.3m invested. The pie chart below shows the cash invested per counterparty, which has a forecast investment income for the year of £419k. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee announced it had raised interest rates this month for the fourth meeting in a row. As a result, the Authority has seen an increase in the average rate earned on cash balances, which is currently at 0.83%. The bar chart below details current interest rate levels paid on these deposits.



IMPACT ASSESSMENT

13. The accelerated inflationary spiral that now appears to be transpiring is likely to affect the expenditure activity in the 2022/23 revenue and capital budget, especially with CPI rates forecast to exceed 10%. As such it is likely that there will be increased pressure on the existing budget and there could be situations where additional resources are required to meet the necessary demand for those goods or services. As such very close monitoring will be maintained throughout the year on all key areas of activity and spend, and Members will be kept regularly updated on any impact that arises.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. Members are requested to:
 - 14.1 Agree in principle to the potential draw down of reserves to meet in-year pressures, if the additional funding needed cannot be met from the resources within the existing base budget (paragraph 3 refers);
 - 13.2 Agree to the authorisation criteria for signing land and building documentation under seal (paragraph 6 refers);
 - 14.3 Note the Special Severance Payment approval limits (paragraph 9 refers);
 - 14.4 Note the position with regard to progressing Immediate Detriment (paragraph 10 refers);
 - 14.5 Note the contents of the report.

By: Chief Executive
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2022
Subject: CUSTOMER SAFETY PLAN UPDATE
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

The report updates Members on progress made in delivering the Customer Safety Plan and the Authority's six supporting strategies to date, and the new projects that have recently started, or are about to start.

The report also sets out the key strategic indicators agreed as part of last year's customer safety plan which are used to monitor progress. Performance against targets for 2021/22 are included in the information report elsewhere on this agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the balanced scorecard of performance measures for 2022/23 (paragraph 12 and **Appendix 1** refers);
2. Approve the annually set targets outside those in the balanced scorecard (paragraphs 13 to 15 refer);
3. Note the progress in delivering the customer safety plan (paragraph 10 and **Appendix 2** refers);
4. Note the revised history of change document (**Appendix 3** refers).

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. Each year Members are requested to approve a plan setting out the Authority's aspirations for the coming time period, linked to its Medium Term Financial Plan. This Plan was renamed the Customer Safety Plan in 2020, in recognition of the Authority's focus on its customers.
2. **Customer Safety Plan:** The current Customer Safety Plan was approved by Members at its meeting held on 22 July 2021. It is underpinned by six strategies:
 - Customer safety and engagement
 - Operational response
 - People
 - Assets and environment
 - Commercial and procurement
 - Business change, information and technology
3. The Customer Safety Plan is the Authority's only corporate plan and discharges a number of the requirements of the National Framework for fire and rescue services. It also takes forward into business any proposals made in a Safety and Wellbeing Plan, and any recommendations arising from inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services.
4. **Ten year risk assessment:** The Customer Safety Plan contains a risk assessment projecting likely changes in the environment in which the Authority operates. This forms the underpinning logic to some of the actions the Authority wishes to progress to protect customers in the coming years. The risk assessment, being only a year old, is likely to be broadly current but some new and emerging issues are also likely to be added. One of the most obvious and worrying issues is the ongoing conflict in the Ukraine, and the impact of this on people, supply chains into the country, and prices for essential commodities. Fuel, electricity and gas prices have risen considerably recently, as has inflation. These increased are likely to continue to increase for some time.
5. A presenting risk for us which may need to be highlighted more in the risk assessment in the Customer Safety Plan is the risk of fuel poverty leading to different choices being made about how people choose to heat their homes and cook for themselves and their families and even which home appliances to use. It is likely that demand operationally may rise as the winter approaches as people turn to rarely used wood burners or open fires for example. We are also aware of reports of some families in such critical financial trouble they are turning off their fridges, leading to incidents of food poisoning. It is also likely that our Safe and Well teams will be making more referrals of vulnerable customers living in fuel poverty.

6. Elsewhere on this agenda, the Fire Reform White Paper is discussed. In addition, in the Queen's speech given in the House of Lords on 10 May 2022 the Government proposed a range of new bills covering:
 - A new procurement bill setting out new procedures post EU exit
 - A new data protection bill
 - A social housing regulation bills giving wider rights to customers to information and data
 - A Modern Slavery bill
 - Audit reform bill to encourage competition in the market
 - A Bill of rights replacing the human rights act
 - A new draft "Protect" Bill around the duties on public authorities to protect public spaces from the threat of terrorism
 - A new bill on levelling up and regeneration
 - A new non domestic rating bill for business rates and property tax paid by companies
7. The pace at which each of these proposed measures will become law is unclear at the time of writing. Taken in isolation, and although only obliquely relevant to us as an emergency service, it is predicted that the Online Safety Bill will of itself soak up a significant amount of parliamentary time as it a huge and complex area.
8. The risk assessment published last year in the Customer Safety Plan is proposed to be refreshed to make reference to these new bills, as each has an impact on us, in terms of new policy, changes of approach and potentially new duties as an employer. We will also review emerging documentation from local partners on supporting a green economy, skills, and social outcomes for customers.
9. A refreshed risk assessment for Kent and Medway will form a key part of this year's Safety and Wellbeing Plan which Members will be asked to consider at the October meeting of the Authority.

Progress in delivering the strategies

10. An update on the progress from year one of the Customer Safety Plan and its supporting strategies is attached at **Appendix 2**. Overall good progress has been made. There have been some delays to some projects due to issues in the supply chain where goods come from Russia and their neighbouring states and worldwide shortages of microchips. Also included in Appendix 1 is the planned actions drawn down from year two of the agreed strategies for Members' information.

Balanced scorecard and associated targets

11. As part of last year's Customer Safety Plan, the key performance indicators were presented in a balanced scorecard to measure the Authority's overall delivery of service

to customers. The scorecard has been reviewed and updated for 2022/23, with indicators drawn from each strategy, and cross-cutting corporate measures.

12. The intention remains that the balanced scorecard provides a high level overview of overall performance, supplementing all the other performance monitoring the Authority will continue to perform. Some of the measures are one off events, such as publication of the transparency in supply chains statement and are examples of good governance in action. The refreshed scorecard for 2022/23 is attached at **Appendix 1** for Members' approval.
13. Members will be aware that the strategic targets are generally set over a three year period, referred to as the medium-term reporting period, however there are a two indicators that are set on an annual basis; absence rate and attendance at calls to automatic fire alarms. The last medium-term reporting period began in April 2021.
14. It is proposed that the sickness absence target remain the same as last year. Although this target was met in 2020/21, it was not met for all staff and operational staff in 2021/22. It is likely the pandemic and ways of working will have influenced the outturn and therefore it seems appropriate to strive to bring performance back to levels seen before the pandemic.
15. It is proposed that the calls to automatic fire alarms target remain the same as last year. Although the target was met in 2020/21, the number of attendances increased last year and the target was missed. Projections suggest activity levels will remain higher than the target so it seems appropriate to push to meet the target for another year.

Table 1: Proposed Performance Measures

| Annual Targets | 2021/22 Outturn | 2021/22 Target | 2022/23 Target |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Calls to automatic fire alarms attended | 2,351 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Absence rate – All colleagues | 5.54 | 3.50 | 3.50 |
| Absence rate – Operational ¹ | 4.46 | 4.01 | 4.01 |
| Absence rate – Corporate ² | 1.94 | 2.22 | 2.22 |

¹ Operational in this context means any colleague employed under grey book terms and conditions, regardless of team role

² Corporate in this context means any colleague employed under green book terms and conditions, regardless of team role

History of change

16. A statement on changes made since 2007 has been included in each Customer and Corporate Plan for the last few years. This has proved to be a very useful document for organisational memory and for the recent inspection process, run by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services. It has been refreshed to include changes made in the last financial year and is presented at **Appendix 3**. Members are requested to approve this statement for republication on the Authority's website.

Next steps

17. If approved at this meeting, the online version of the Customer Safety Plan will be refreshed using the content of this report.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. Members are requested to:
 - 19.1 Approve the balanced scorecard of performance measures for 2022/23 (paragraph 12 and **Appendix 1** refers);
 - 19.2 Approve the annually set targets outside those in the balanced scorecard (paragraph 13 to 15 refer);
 - 19.3 Note the progress in delivering the customer safety plan (paragraph 10 and **Appendix 2** refers);
 - 19.4 Note the revised history of change document (**Appendix 3** refers).

Kent Fire & Rescue Service 2022/23 Balanced Scorecard (May 2022)

comparison to previous FY is to equivalent month
chart shows FYTD position against target (blue)

| Economy | May-22 Revised Budget | Spend and Commitments (£'m) as % of Revised Budget | % against Target | Comment | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
| 2022/23 Revenue Budget (£xxm) | | | | | |
| 2022/23 Infrastructure Capital Budget (Original Budget - £1xxm) | | | | | |
| 2022/23 Infrastructure Revenue Budget (Original Budget - £xxm) | | | | | |
| 2022/23 Accounts: Receipt of the Auditors statement of assurance | | | | | |
| 2022/23 Accounts: Unqualified accounts achieved for the previous financial year | | | | | |
| Efficiency | May-22 | FYTD | Comparison to previous FYTD | % against Target | Comment |
| % of Station Based Training accessed <i>Knowledge</i> (data 1 month in arrears) <i>Assessment</i> <i>Drill</i> <i>Simulated event</i> | | | | | Wholetime: %, On call: % Wholetime: %, On call: % Wholetime: %, On call: % Wholetime: %, On call: % |
| LPI 406 Absence Rate <i>All Staff</i> <i>Operational</i> <i>Corporate</i> | | | | | |
| Average appliance availability <i>Day</i> <i>Night</i> | | | | | |
| Life-threatening calls with first appliance in attendance within 10 mins | | | | | |
| Effectiveness | May-22 | FYTD | Comparison to previous FYTD | # against Target | Comment |
| Prevention and Customer Engagement & Safety | | | | | |
| LPI 107 Smoke Alarms Fitted But Did Not Activate | | | | | (data is calculated on both accidental and deliberate) |
| LPI 108 No Smoke Alarm Fitted | | | | | (data is calculated on both accidental and deliberate) |
| LPI 202(i) Safe & Well <i>S&W</i> and Home Fire Safety Visits <i>HFSV</i> | | | | | (HFSV include stations and taskforce) |
| Protection | | | | | |
| LPI 304 Building Regulation Consultations completed | | | | | FYTD No. Completed Consultations: |
| LPI 305 Risk Based Inspection Programme (yr 1 of 3) | | | | | (3 year programme, based on 860 audits per year (includes full and short audits)) |
| LPI 302 Fire Safety Concerns Responded to Within 24 Hours | | | | | Current Month total rec'd: |
| Operations | | | | | |
| LPI 100 - All Fires | | | | | |
| Fatalities (accidental) | | | | | |
| LPI 148 Severity of Acc. Dwelling Fires <i>Minor</i> <i>Moderate</i> <i>Severe</i> | | | | | |
| Emergency Medical Response (Co-Responding) | | | | | FYTD No. ROSC achieved: |
| Customer & Corporate | May-22 | FYTD | Comparison to previous FYTD | % against Target | Comment |
| Key Issue Annual Survey | | | | | |
| Transparency in Supply Chains statement published | | | | | |
| Data breaches reportable to the Office of the Information Commissioner | | | | | |
| FOIs Completed (% within 20 days) | | | | | FYTD No. Requests Received: |
| No. of complaints received | | | | | FYTD No. Complaints Resolved/Withdrawn: |
| Availability of the core IT network | | | | | |
| % disclosure of EDI characteristics <i>Operations</i> <i>Finance & Corporate Services</i> | | | | | (data calculated on Ethnicity, Belief, Disability & Sexual Orientation) |

Progress in delivering the Customer Safety Plan

- Members agreed the six strategies underpinning the Customer Safety Plan at the meeting of the Authority in July 2021. The strategies cover all aspects of the Authority's transformation work and explain what we are doing to deliver the Authority's aim and objectives. The list of strategies is presented below:
 - Response and Resilience Strategy
 - Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy
 - People Strategy
 - Business Change, Information and Technology Strategy
 - Environmental Improvement and Assets Strategy
 - Commercial and Procurement Strategy
- The first two strategies are outwardly focused, whereas the remaining four focus primarily on internal processes, essential for the delivery of an effective and efficient fire and rescue service. Supporting the delivery of each strategy is a detailed tactical plan, which is used to guide the work in each area and monitor progress towards delivering the Authority's strategic priorities.
- Over the past year the Authority has delivered 12% of all the actions, which is slightly under the 17% estimated completion for Year 1. The table below shows progress across the six strategies.

| Strategy | Initiatives | | % | | In progress |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|
| | 2021/22 Baseline | 2021/22 Actual | 2021/22 Baseline | 2021/22 Actual | |
| Response & Resilience | 9 | 3 | 15% | 5% | 62% |
| Customer Engagement & Safety | 38 | 26 | 35% | 24% | 50% |
| People | 18 | 17 | 13% | 13% | 34% |
| Business Change, I&T | 6 | 4 | 10% | 7% | 44% |
| Commercial & Procurement | 1 | 0 | 3% | 0% | 85% |
| Assets & Environment | 7 | 6 | 14% | 12% | 52% |
| Property & Environment | 6 | 4 | 15% | 10% | |
| Fleet | 1 | 2 | 10% | 20% | |
| TOTAL | 79 | 56 | 17% | 12% | |

- Response and Resilience Strategy:** the Authority continues to make good progress in delivering the Station Based Training project. This project, which is 90% complete, is

implementing a new National Operational Guidance scenario-based framework of station training (aligned to the requirements of the Institute of Fire Engineers). The framework replaces the training calendar and allows individuals to demonstrate that they can successfully transfer the knowledge into practical skills in line with the 26 National Operational Guidance scenarios.

5. Work to relocate the Authority's Control function to Coldharbour is also progressing well. Extensive engagement and consultation have taken place with FRCC colleagues in order to establish the requirements of their workspace at Coldharbour and influence the design and building works. These works are now ongoing and expected to be completed by December 22. After that, there will be a period of transition and migration to Coldharbour, which is due to start in June 23.
6. Other activities currently being progressed as part of this strategy include:
 - Review our emergency response provision;
 - Conduct a gap analysis against the UCLAN/FBU contaminant report and implement required changes;
 - Review of water, flooding, and unstable ground;
 - Replace the National Specialist Firefighting personal protective equipment framework;
 - Create a functional team to measure performance and use data more effectively to target improvements;
 - Consolidate the risk-based inspection programme.
7. **Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy:** The Authority has completed 24% of all the activities underpinning the delivery of this Strategy. This included the achievement of the 'Investing in Volunteers' quality standard, which recognises our commitment to providing an outstanding volunteering experience within the Service. The Volunteers assessor, who conducted interviews during December and January, praised the ethos of the team and confirmed that the Authority provides a professional, carefully managed, and well-resourced experience for all the volunteers. This recognition demonstrates the invaluable contribution every one of our volunteers makes in helping us to create a safer future for Kent and Medway.
8. Work continues to fully develop the capabilities of the Authority's new website, which went live in early December 21. The new platform has been designed to be fully accessible and easy to access through mobile devices.
9. Other work in progress as part of this strategy include:

- Development of the Dynamics risk management system;
 - Development and implementation of processes and procedures to ensure excellent customer service;
 - Development of customer personas (semi-fictional descriptions that represents the key traits of audience segments, based on data);
 - Review of Primary and Early Years offer;
 - Assess the impact of the introduction of the Building Safety Bill and align our processes and resources to meet the legislative requirements;
 - Create a highly trained and multifunctional Building Safety Team;
 - Deliver programme to increase the level of customer centric culture across the organisation.
10. **People Strategy:** The Authority completed 13% of the individual activities underpinning this strategy in Year 1, which is in line with the planned performance. In addition, work on 36% of the activities within the tactical plan are now in progress.
11. Activities completed as part of this strategy include:
- Implementation of the Integrated Learning and Assurance Model which has been designed to help colleagues maintain and build confidence and skills by integrating ten different elements of the Authority's operational learning and assurance work into one single coherent model;
 - Creation of the Leadership Development Team (LDT) and People Organisational Design and Development Team (POOD);
 - Workplace stress assessment to identify ongoing organisational needs to support reduction of stress in the workplace.
12. The Authority continues to implement the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Programme designed to promote and progress this important agenda. As part of this programme of work, training is being rolled out to raise awareness, and upskill colleagues to help embed EDI as part of our day-to-day activities. A new neurodiversity toolkit for managers is also being developed to support a better understanding of neurodiversity in the workplace.
13. Other work in progress as part of the People Strategy include:
- Replacement of the Time and Attendance system;
 - Implementation of Station Based Training project;

- Development of customer personas (semi-fictional descriptions that represents the key traits of audience segments, based on data);;
 - Develop and Implement the Reward and Recognition Framework and Employer of Choice Framework;
 - Re-design the workplace to improve home/work flexibility and balance including contractual offer;
 - Further develop the Inspiring Leadership Programme to support all leaders and managers.
14. **Business Change, Information and Technology Strategy:** this strategy focuses on making the best use of technology to allow colleagues in the organisation to do their jobs simply and effectively. This means selecting and implementing technical solutions that are adaptable, accessible, and take into consideration the broad range of needs of our workforce.
15. Last year we restructured the Business Change team to enhance our portfolio management and project delivery capabilities and create a more cohesive approach to delivering change. This ensures our portfolio planning activities fully align with the Authority's corporate and financial planning processes.
16. We also completed the migration of core services to the Microsoft Cloud including e-mail, document management and backup. All colleagues now have access to Microsoft Office 365 from any device (either provided by the Authority or personal), which provides a flexible and safe environment. Major benefits of moving to the Cloud include increased resilience and minimal downtime in the event of major technical failure.
17. In total 44% of actions included in the tactical plan supporting this strategy are currently being progressed including:
- Replacement of the Time and Attendance system;
 - Replacing the current Fleet Management and Hydrant Management systems;
 - Relocate the Control function to Coldharbour;
 - Implement a Facilities management system;
 - Replace existing laptops and desktop provision for all users;
 - Implement new software for mobile data terminals;
 - Development of the Dynamics risk management system;
 - Replace printers across the estate.

18. **Environmental Improvement and Assets Strategy:** this strategy aims to support the delivery of the Authority's aim and objectives by ensuring that:
- our estate is located in the right places, is fit for purpose and provides a safe and pleasant environment to work in;
 - our fleet of vehicles, and equipment are replaced and maintained effectively causing minimum disruption to our services and taking advantage of technological developments to increase safety and effectiveness;
 - we review our practices and behaviours and introduce the necessary improvements to minimise our impact on the environment.
19. The Authority delivered last year 12% of all the activities within the tactical action plan. These included:
- Delivery of a plan to roll out PPE racking and BA servicing;
 - Developed a programme for the cyclical refurbishment of all our stations based on priority needs;
 - Developed and implemented a new suite of property services policies that include standards for inclusive design in all our properties;
 - Replaced the Authority's fleet of pool cars achieving efficiencies through the reduction in total numbers;
 - Established a Green Forum with wide representation from colleagues across all areas to generate ideas for environmental improvement and support behaviour change.
20. **Commercial and Procurement Strategy:** The focus of this strategy continues to be to support the delivery of the National Fire Commercial Transformation Programme to improve its commercial strategy through a more joined-up and collaborative approach.
21. As part of this programme the Authority is progressing with the delivery of the project to set up a national framework for Specialist Firefighting PPE clothing. This project, which is led by the Authority on behalf of the sector, will establish a National multi-supplier Framework arrangement open to all blue light Services. This will eliminate the current fragmented approach, which has generated multiple tendering activities across FRSs, duplication of costs and effort associated with procurement and contract management. The joined-up approach will also ensure we all follow the same Standards. The project is expected to complete by the end of 2022.

22. Work to deliver the strategies continue and the table below shows the key projects that are included in the plan for 2022/23. The table also shows which phase they are at within the project lifecycle.

| Pre-Project | Initiation | Planning | Implementation | Progress |
|--|--|---|---|----------|
| 167CSU - Command Support Unit (CSU) vehicle and tech refresh | 094ESMCP - Introduction of Emergency Services Network | 140FLEET - Fleet & Ops Equipment Management System procurement and implementation | 010MDT - Mobile Data Terminals | 50% |
| 217NWF - Replacement of National Workwear Framework | 162WATER - Water Services System replacement (Hydra) | 180CCRI - Command & Control Review and Implementation | 051WLAN - Network upgrade | 100% |
| 222ROBA - Review of Breathing Apparatus | 198PFS - Property & Facilities System (CAFM) | 188PPE - Replacement of National PPE Framework | ICCS Replacement (Police Project) | n/a |
| 229CCTV - Replacement of CCTV | 255UCLANFBU - Gap analysis against UCLAN/FBU contaminants report | 195ALF - Ashford and Live Fire | 135RISKMAN - Improvement of customers and premises risk management (Dynamics) | 60% |
| 232TRMOVE - Relocate the Technical Rescue Team | | | 148DEVPROC - Device re-procurement and refresh including MACs | 10% |
| 234DCMOVE - Relocate the Distribution Centre | | | 163WEBSITE - Procure and create a customer experience platform | 50% |
| 235TELTEL - Replacement of Telematics and Telemetry | | | 183SFFPPE - Specialist Firefighting PPE | 80% |
| 236MAIT - Implement MAIT | | | 200SBT - Station Based Training | 90% |
| 243OCTURNOUT - Replacement of OC Turnout Solution | | | 201PRINT - Managed Print | 90% |
| 244NOGACCESS - Access to NOG | | | 219TAA - Time & Attendance Replacement and Implementation | 50% |
| 252SPDECM - SharePoint Cloud Migration and Decommissioning | | | 230CONMOVE - Control Location Move | 10% |
| 254RERP - Review of Emergency Response Provision (RERP) | | | 231SLM - Review and implement improved social listening methodology | 0% |
| | | | | |

History of Change

We have undergone considerable changes over the past five years. The key changes and developments are set out below.

2017

- Work starts on designing and drafting the new Customer and Corporate Plan 2018-2022.
- Recruited 21 wholetime firefighters – the first such recruitment since 2007.
- New fire station opened in Chatham.
- Maintained emergency medical response capability from the majority of on-call sections and a number of wholetime sections.
- Roll out of flexible rostering to Dartford, Thames-side, Tunbridge Wells, Dover, Folkestone and Ashford.
- Building work started on the new fire station at Ramsgate.
- Introduced improved desktop terminal devices and software across the Service.
- Maintained “Excellent” status in the Local Government Association equality framework.
- Achieved Kent Dementia Friendly employer of the year.
- We made a corporate commitment alongside Kent Police to support the White Ribbon Campaign.

2018

- Recruited a second cohort of 24 wholetime firefighters.
- Completed the move to flexible rostering.
- Rolled out response to medical emergencies by on-call crews
- Invested in new operational assets to improve our capabilities.
- Created a new team to focus solely on the On-call section.
- New Customer and Corporate Plan 2018-2022 published. Delivery of this underpinned by eight strategies. Two of the strategies (Community Safety and Engagement) are outwardly focussed. The other six (Operational Response, Procurement, Performance and Data, Assets, IT and Business Change, and People) focussed primarily on internal processes essential for the delivery of an effective and efficient fire and rescue service.
- Embedding the concept of ‘customer’ in the Service. Developing the Customer Advocate Programme.
- Consolidated our support for mental health and well-being, culture change and embedded the ‘Think Contaminants’ project.

2019

- Cultivation of talent pipeline and future leaders.
- Restructured middle management layer to bring resource into projects and new Station Leaders following restructure of station leadership teams.
- National lead on procurement (PPE, workwear and training).
- The new fire station in Ramsgate officially opened, replacing the previous fire station which had been in operation since 1905.
- EU exit planning successfully implemented.
- Customer and Corporate Plan refreshed and underpinning strategies reviewed to ensure that they remain suitable.
- Wide-ranging restructure of the Community Safety and Technical Fire Safety teams undertaken. The two departments were renamed Customer Safety and Building Safety respectively and we implemented an investment programme to allow the teams to deliver the aims of the Community Safety strategy.
- Creation of a new Collaboration Team (following restructure) to lead on delivering collaboration activities efficiently and economically, whilst making sure benefits could be tracked and evaluated.
- The Customer Experience and Behaviour Change Team (also created as part of the restructure) implemented the framework and methodology for behaviour change, using customer insight and research to develop safety programmes that ensure customers' needs are put first.
- New wellbeing manager role created and dedicated Wellbeing Zone set up on our intranet.
- Year one of national operational guidance project fully delivered.
- Set up of complex buildings programme and externally created baseline survey.
- Introduction of Stairwell Protection Teams and smoke hoods.
- Creation of central Risk Reduction Team centralising risk data.
- Pilot of safe and well visits in high risk premises.
- Station Leader model embedded and joint work on development of stations underway.
- New station plans created by fire stations.
- Work completed on full analysis of our actions against prevention of future death notices.
- Work started on review of training with workshops with crews leading to an integrated model of learning.

- Further progress and delivery on our 'Think Contaminants' project to protect firefighters.
- People impact assessments for four core activities created and opened up for consultation across the sector.
- Leadership framework and new leadership curriculum being implemented along with leadership programme for Crew Managers.
- Leadership conference held all managers (including Station Leaders) leading to new thinking on a number of issues.
- Co-design of promotion questions for all staff shared with fire sector.
- Safeguarding training completed by all staff
- Continued to move on from appraisal to an approach centred on high performance coaching.
- Recognition of the FRSA (Fire and Rescue Services Association, formerly called the Retained Firefighters' Union).
- Network and data security improved through removal of password reset and introduction of three new words.
- Improvements to our maternity and paternity provision.
- Carry out 'Feeling Valued' survey with full results given to staff and actions taken forward.
- ACAS commissioned to ensure we are doing all we can to support staff in relation to bullying.
- Work with Kent Autistic Trust leads to improve the Service's support for customers with autism. KFRS's approach shared with the sector.
- Schools education programme overhauled and improved in consultation with schools.
- New format station open days found to be hugely successful.
- Support 'BeYou' project for LGBTQ+ young people at fire stations.
- We accept the invitation of the HeForShe campaign for men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a visible and united force for gender equality (referred to as 'Men and Women as Allies').
- 'Ten from Len' safe and well campaign with Len Goodman launched.

2020

- On 24 March, the multi-agency Strategic Coordination Group declared the coronavirus pandemic to be a major incident. In response to the pandemic, we undertook additional work which included: supporting SECamb with logistics and delivery of PPE to ambulance facilities across Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex and Surrey; making our Fleet Technicians available to assist with ambulance breakdowns; operational crews responding to falls in the

home; supporting SECAMB with testing equipment and PPE; releasing KFRS staff to undertake more supportive work to SECAMB colleagues, and acting as the procurement hub for the provision of covid PPE to all 45 fire and rescue services in England. In addition, we assisted Kent County Council with the distribution of food parcels to the vulnerable and elderly, delivered meals for Age UK and provided pharmacies with support for delivery of prescriptions.

- We declare a climate emergency and begin to develop a Carbon Action Plan to make KFRS carbon neutral by 2030.
- We introduced our first 11 hybrid vehicles to the fleet. We aim that by 2030, 75% of our pool cars, vans and maintenance vehicles will be ultra-low emission or hybrid vehicles.
- All vehicles in our fleet are now fitted with telemetry tracking systems allowing us to monitor mileage and engine idling time.
- New mobile data terminals installed on fire engines. New software under development to further improve their effectiveness.
- Operational groups reorganised into four sections: East Group, West Group, On-call Group, and Ops Readiness Group. The latter created to support the delivery of Station Based Training and provide management of operational establishment and sickness.
- 'Station Based Training' project implemented with the aim to provide operational personnel (including Fire Control Operators) with background knowledge of relevant National Operational Guidance as well as local risk based guidance.
- Folkestone becomes the first fire station in Kent to be a 'fire and ambulance response station'. Two ambulances are now based at Folkestone fire station and available to respond on a 24/7 basis.
- KFRS brand refreshed and rolled out internally bringing clarity to our brand identity and helping us to explain our beliefs and ambitions. Focus of the brand is 'Together', based on the idea of: KFRS as a great place to work – 'we are one team'; and KFRS working with customers to build a safer Kent and Medway.
- The Engagement team launch the 'Kent Together' campaign to identify resources and support to help people get through the coronavirus pandemic.
- Equality of access. Developed and published a range of national equality of access cases and shared them with the sector.

2021

- In September, HMICFRS undertook an inspection of our response to the coronavirus pandemic (results to be published early 2021).
 - July 2020, our updated Customer and Corporate Plan 2020-2024 was approved by the Fire Authority. The document was renamed the Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024 in line with our stated focus on the customer.
 - December 2020, prior to their replacement a final update was presented to the Fire Authority on progress made to deliver the eight strategies of the Customer Safety Plan 2020-2024.
 - This confirmed that over 70% of the activities within each strategy had already been completed or were being progressed. As a result, the Service is successfully working to deliver its stated aim and objectives.
 - Embed processes to ensure that Small, Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Black Minority Enterprises (BMEs) bid for contracts without discriminating against larger firms.
 - Roll out of a toolkit and evaluation template that can be adopted to ensure social value and social wellbeing can be accurately and realistically quantified and tracked throughout the life of new contracts.
 - Publish our Code of Ethics, which is based on the Nolan Principles and clearly sets out the standards of ethical and professional behaviour we expect.
-
- New KFRS brand rolled out to external audiences across Kent and Medway.
 - Following the experience of flexible working during the pandemic, we commit to truly flexible working for office-based teams.
 - We publish our Modern Slavery Policy, which sets out our zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery, human trafficking and all forms of servitude and forced and compulsory labour in all our own business, commercial relationships, and any of our supply chains.
 - Initiated review of planning assumptions for emergency cover. Part of the process of ensuring that our cover continues to be as effective as possible.
 - Adopt the first four fire standards published by the Fire Standards Board (Emergency Response Driver Training, Operational Preparedness, Operational Competence and Operational Learning Fire Standards).
 - HMICFRS publish results of their inspection of our response to the coronavirus pandemic, stating that we adapted effectively and efficiently to the considerable demands that were imposed upon us by the pandemic and

also recognising that we did so while maintaining our day-to-day service and fulfilling all of our statutory duties.

- Lead on two national projects: the National Firefighting Specific Training Framework and the National Specialist PPE Framework. The former will deliver a route to market for all FRSs to procure their training service requirements to align with National Operational Guidance (NOG) training outcomes.
- Purchase of new response cars undertaken through a collaborative approach with the Metropolitan Police.
- Companion devices (tablets) to fire engine mobile data terminals rolled out to trial fire stations as part of a test of their effectiveness ahead of Service-wide roll out.
- Green Forum established to oversee the Climate Action Plan and generate new ideas to drive change and achieve our goal of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- Code of Ethics further updated and linked to the proposed Code of Ethics Fire Standard that has been drafted in partnership with the Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. As part of our commitment to the highest ethical standards, all colleagues are required to commit to this.
- Two new NFCC work stream lead officers – Dir. Rist (Environment and climate change) and AM Deadman (Alternative fuels and energy systems)
- Completed the National Operational Guidance project, resulting in the alignment of all KFRS operational policies to national guidance – the first FRS in the UK to do so.
- Supported other FRS across the UK with their efforts to implement, sharing what we had learnt and developed.

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By: Chief Executive
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2022
Subject: GOVERNANCE AND POLICY UPDATES
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report covers the following governance issues:

- A.** Reforming our Fire and Rescue Services White paper (paragraphs 1 to 4 refers);
- B.** Transparency in Supply Chains Statement (paragraph 5 refers);
- C.** Supplier Code of Conduct Policy (paragraph 6 refers);
- D.** Social Media Policy (paragraph 7 refers);
- E.** Legal Assistance Policy (paragraph 8 refers);
- F.** Allegations against staff policy (paragraphs 9 refers);
- G.** Environment policy (paragraphs 10 refers)
- H.** Coldharbour Control Lease Arrangements (paragraphs 13 to 18 refers)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the draft response to the consultation on the Reforming our Fire and Rescue Services White Paper (paragraphs 1 to 4 and **Appendix 1** refers);
2. Approve the Transparency in Supply Chains Statement (paragraph 5 and **Appendix 2** refers);
3. Approve the Supplier Code of Conduct Policy (paragraph 6 and **Appendix 3** refers);
4. Approve the Social Media Policy (paragraph 7 and **Appendix 4** refers);

5. Approve the Legal Assistance Policy (paragraph 8 and **Appendix 5** refers);
6. Approve the Allegations Against Staff Policy (paragraph 9 and **Appendix 6** refers).
7. Approve the Environment Policy (paragraph 10 and **Appendix 7** refers).
8. Approve that the lease for the Authority's 999 Control Room at Coldharbour be signed (paragraphs 13 to 18 refers)

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: See each section

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL:

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

COMMENTS

A. Reforming our Fire and Rescue Services White Paper

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

1. On 18 May 2022, the Government published the long-awaited fire reform white paper, Reforming our Fire and Rescue Services¹. First mooted more than three years ago, the white paper covers:
 - A proposal for a requirement for business continuity plans to be independently assessed
 - Creation of a College of Fire, and subsuming the Fire Standards Board into it
 - A review of pay machinery including reviewing the efficacy of the National Joint Council arrangements for amendments to pay and conditions for firefighters
 - Placing the national code of ethics on a statutory footing
 - Creation of a fire service oath and requiring new starters to sign up to it
 - Fast-track and direct entry schemes
 - Suggestions for amendments to the governance arrangements currently in place but stopping short of mandating change.
 - “Operational independence for Chief Fire Officers” (sic)
2. Outside of the White Paper, the Government will also be consulting on how best to progress recommendations arising from the Grenfell enquiry but appears to be moving away from the concept of personal evacuation plans for residents of high rises premises. This will be brought to a future meeting for Members’ consideration.
3. As a White Paper, primary legislation will be required to enact a number of the changes should they be taken forward, following consultation. The Government’s wider programme announced in the Queen’s Speech is discussed elsewhere on this agenda.
4. The closing date for the consultation aligned to the White Paper is 26 July 2022. A draft response is attached at **Appendix 1** for Members’ consideration. Members may wish to refer to the link in the footnote below to review the contextual statement made before each consultation question.

B. Transparency in Supply Chains Statement 2022/23

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

5. Members will recall considering the Modern Slavery Policy at the meeting held on 23 February 2021. Part of the requirements of the Modern Slavery Policy is the

¹ Available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service/consultation-document-accessible>

publication of a Transparency in Supply Chains Statement. The second statement has now been completed covering the 2021/22 financial year and demonstrates the work the Authority has and will continue to undertake to eradicate modern slavery in its supply arrangements. The statement is attached at **Appendix 2** for Members' approval.

C. Supplier Code of Conduct Policy

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

6. The Authority's purpose and values shape everything we do and we work hard to be inclusive and creative and to be a place of work. We would like the suppliers we work with to share these values with us. This new policy sets out our commitment to ensuring that our suppliers work with us to apply the same values and standards across all supply chains. It is attached at **Appendix 3** for Members' approval.

D. Social Media Policy

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

7. As part of the Authority's engagement with the inclusion charity Opening Doors, a range of policies were reviewed in terms of how well they support inclusion in the workplace. This resulted in a few minor suggestions being made to amend the language used in the social media policy last approved by Members in February 2022. It is attached at **Appendix 4** and Members are requested to approve it.

E. Legal Assistance Policy

Lead/Contact Officer: Chris Else - Assistant Director, Resilience 01622 692121 ext. 8343, chris.else@kent.fire-uk.org

8. This new policy articulates the support the Authority will provide to any employee when they are under investigation by an enforcement agency for actions completed whilst at work. We know from history that sadly some colleagues may find themselves in positions where their actions at work result in harm to an individual including death and injury, or loss/damage to property. In addition, the actions may be looked at as part of a public inquiry. It sets the parameters of support and the points at which it will be withdrawn. It has been reviewed by our legal advisors. It is attached at **Appendix 5** for Members' approval.

F. Allegations Against Staff Policy

Lead/Contact Officer: Chris Else - Assistant Director, Resilience 01622 692121 ext. 8343, chris.else@kent.fire-uk.org

9. The allegations policy has been refreshed and separated from the Feedback Policy which Members considered at the February meeting of the Authority. It aligns to

national guidance and the requirements of local partners. It is attached at **Appendix 6** for Members' approval.

G. Environment Policy

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

10. We recognise that we can affect the environment through the services we provide and how we deliver them, our policies, our enforcement of laws and regulations and the choices we make when buying goods or commissioning services. We acknowledge our role and responsibility for the protection and enhancement of the environment and have implemented a Climate Action Plan to maximise energy efficiency, to reduce and prevent pollution reduce the impact on the environment from our operations and to deliver environmental improvements through partnership and collaborative working. This policy seeks to set out the environmental aims of Kent Fire and Rescue Service and its commitment to continuous improvement. It is attached at **Appendix 7** for Members' approval.

Recently Refreshed Policies

11. The currency of our policy framework is an important issue to us. As well as those policies which are new or fundamentally altered requiring Members' further consideration, a number have recently been reviewed to ensure they remain current. Recent refreshed policies include the bullying and harassment policy and the equality diversity and inclusion policies, both of which were following small suggestions by Opening Doors. Others are listed below
 - **Recall to duty guidance** – periodic review
 - **Resilience and detached duties guidance** - periodic review and added planned overtime
 - **Annual leave policy** – re-formatted to improve its readability and added improvements to terms and conditions – long service leave is added to day one entitlement and part time employees are entitled to all bank holidays which occur after their start date (no longer calculating pro rata entitlement)
 - **Domestic abuse policy** – re-formatted to improve its readability
 - **Working time policy** – re-formatted to improve its readability
 - **Special leave policy** – re-formatted to improve its readability plus added an additional day for recovery after vasectomy
 - **Family related** – general review, reviewed and adjusted arrangements for leave for pregnancy loss
 - **Modified duties and reasonable adjustments** – added provisions for neurodiversity and hybrid work

- **Health and Wellbeing** –updated to remove duplication with our capability policy and brought it in line with the most recent support and developments within this area
 - **Community right to challenge** – refreshed to reflect current organisational structures
12. Over the coming months, short videos will be published on the Authority’s intranet site highlighting the key provisions of policies for all colleagues.

H. Coldharbour Control Lease Arrangements

Lead/Contact Officer: Chris Else - Assistant Director, Resilience
 01622 692121 ext. 8343, chris.else@kent.fire-uk.org

13. As part of the report introducing the Customer Safety Plan considered by Members in July 2021, Members were also given an update on the progress being made by Kent Police to relocate their Force Control Room from its current location at Sutton Road, to their Coldharbour estate.
14. Work has progressed well and a dedicated space has been identified for our team, which can be branded to reflect how integral a part of the Kent Fire and Rescue Service team our 999 call handlers are. The migration of the control team is scheduled for completion in May/June 23.
15. Alongside the move to Coldharbour, in support of the control requirements for space, it was also agreed that the Authority would support Kent Police by providing a dedicated space at the Godlands site in Maidstone (within the Kent Resilience Team building). This space will provide occupation for designated individuals within the Citizens in Policing team, as well as, an open-zone bookable space for Kent Police colleagues. This space is currently providing occupation under a short-term tenancy at will.
16. Two independent heads of terms lease agreements are being finalised for both Coldharbour and the space at fire headquarters. It was agreed each party would contribute to the costs of fitting out their respective spaces. The Coldharbour lease will be for five room spaces (Control room, Major Incident Room, Kitchenette/Rest Room, Corridor/Locker area and a Manager’s Office) totalling approx. 141m2 plus the necessary common parts and specified vehicle/pedestrian access ways. The lease for the Police space at fire headquarters is also for five room spaces (2 X Offices, Open Zone, Store Room and a small comms room cupboard) totalling approx. 103m2 plus the necessary common parts and specified vehicle/pedestrian access ways.
17. Each separate lease agreement includes:
- a minimum of 10 years with commencement of the lease subject to agreement between both the Landlord and Tenant and in alignment with occupation of the spaces.

- The notice period for exercising break rights is a minimum 36 months following 7 years of tenancy (therefore ensuring a minimum lease of 10 years).
 - The notice period for renewal being a minimum of 24 months before end of lease. Length of renewal subject to agreement between Landlord and Tenant.
 - Provision for a nominal rental charge and recovery of service charges. Charges expected to be broadly in line with existing service charges between Police and Fire.
18. In accordance with the Authority's Scheme of Delegations the length of the lease with Kent Police requires Members' approval. Its costs can be contained within existing budgets.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. Members are requested to:
- 20.1 Approve the draft response to the consultation on the Reforming our Fire and Rescue Services White Paper (paragraphs 1 to 4 refers and **Appendix 1** refer);
- 20.2 Approve the Transparency in Supply Chains Statement (paragraph 5 and **Appendix 2** refers);
- 20.3 Approve the Supplier Code of Conduct Policy (paragraph 6 and **Appendix 3** refers);
- 20.4 Approve the Social Media Policy (paragraph 7 and **Appendix 4** refers);
- 20.5 Approve the Legal Assistance Policy (paragraph 8 and **Appendix 5** refers);
- 20.6 Approve the Allegations against staff policy (paragraph 9 and **Appendix 6** refers).
- 20.7 Approve the Environment policy (paragraph 10 and **Appendix 7** refers).
- 20.8 Approve that the lease for the Authority's 999 Control Room at Coldharbour be signed (paragraphs 13 to 18 refers)

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together

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Dear Lord Greenhaugh

Reforming our Fire and Rescue Services White Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Reforming our Fire and Rescue Services White Paper. This response was considered by Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting held on 5 July 2022.

We have answered each question in turn, and made additional comments where we feel necessary. Overall we welcome the publication of the White Papers, and support change which benefits the customers we serve and makes more effective as a public service.

The Role of Fire and Rescue Services

Q1: To what extent do you agree/disagree that fire and rescue services should have the flexibility to deploy resources to help address current and future threats faced by the public beyond core fire and rescue duties?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

It is impossible to disagree with the question as worded. All colleagues working in fire and rescue services will want to use their skills and commitment to public service if there was a public need. Our experience of the early stages of COVID does not reflect the experiences put forward in the White Paper. Here, local industrial relations, and resources at our disposal that were not FBU members, allowed us to play a full part in response from the outset and from the very first strategic co-ordination group held by the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We shared the Chair of the LRF throughout the response phase with Kent Police and Kent County Council, rotating on a weekly basis.

Our ability to immediately put resources in place was not due to structures and governance per se. It is because we have invested time and effort with our colleagues in the LRF so we are



seen as an equal partner, with something to bring to the table and a can do attitude. It is perhaps also because we have a degree of continuity at senior level and senior officers with experience from working in other agencies in previous roles. We have also worked to maintain good industrial relations locally over the years with all accredited representatives.

We can deploy our resources based on presenting need, as we are doing at the present time to support Ukrainian families find safe accommodation in the UK.

Q2: To what extent do you agree/disagree that fire and rescue services should play an active role in supporting the wider health and public safety agenda?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

We very strongly agree with this statement. There is an important role for fire and rescue services supporting the most vulnerable customers, taking a holistic view of their home setting, reducing risk to that customer immediately and signposting them to support from other agencies, such as primary or secondary care, or implementing safeguarding protocols.

Q3: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the business continuity requirements set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 provide sufficient oversight to keep the public safe in the event of strike action?

Strongly agree **Agree** Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

We note in the text to this section that the government does not intend to remove the right of firefighters to withdraw their labour.

We welcome independent assurance of our arrangements for business continuity – but the biggest threat to that business continuity nationally is the right to withdraw labour. It is in the government’s power to remove this risk should it be minded to do so.



Q4: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the current pay negotiation arrangements are appropriate?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

Q5: Please provide the reasons for your response.

We note the White Paper's commitment to a review of the National Joint Council arrangements in place. We note the observations of numerous commentators since and including Sir George Bain that the current mechanics of pay are too slow and too cumbersome for the current business needs. It is noted that many local authorities have moved to locally agreed terms and conditions, and this is a model which could be explored to support a flexible approach to pay and conditions and functions locally within a lighter touch England wide framework. Alternatively pay review bodies akin to the police or MPs could be explored.

Nurturing New and Existing Talent

Q6: To what extent do you agree/disagree that consistent entry requirements should be explored for fire and rescue service roles?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

Q7: Please provide the reasons for your response.

There are various roles within the fire and rescue sector which already require professional qualifications and continuous professional development such as human resources, finance, and procurement.

We do not agree with this proposal if aimed at firefighters as the implication is a requirement for academic qualifications. We already have clear entry requirements, and all fire and rescue services are focused on values and behaviours as entry criteria. The introduction of the need for



GCSEs or equivalents will be extremely difficult for on-call fire stations which are already difficult to feed with the right candidates. We are a sector which has a rich history in allowing people with many talents to find work without requiring academic history. We also recognise approximately 20% of our workforce is neurodiverse and that does not always lend itself to doing well in the school years.

We would be more interested in how the range of roles available are marketed nationally, for example in business safety and customer safety to attract a more diverse workforce.

Q8: To what extent do you agree/disagree that other roles, in addition to station and area managers, would benefit from a direct entry and talent management scheme?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

Any colleague in a green book role is essentially a direct entry to the Service. In Kent that applies at all levels including the Chief Executive. It allows us to bring in the right skills and add capacity we need to meet our business needs.

If the intention of this proposal relates purely to those under grey book terms and conditions, and is to bring in colleagues that will take over operational incidents, we disagree with this proposal. It is not fair in the White Paper to say that the current process is a “time based system”. It is a system based on layering of experience, and some colleagues will move through the process quicker than others to higher incident command levels or specialist roles.

To bring someone in with no operational fire service background and to expect frontline firefighters to have trust in their decision making for, for example, where to place a firebreak in an incident in a row of thatched cottages to save the most property possible, is, we believe, very difficult to achieve. The proposal undermines the White Paper’s own stated intention of increasing professionalism by denigrating the role of a firefighter as a profession and believing that someone that works in a non-customer facing role elsewhere could do the same job as them, or lead firefighters on the fireground.

Professionalism

Q9: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed introduction of a 21st century leadership programme?



Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Q10: Please provide reasons for your response.

The existing Executive Leadership Programme and many other in-house managerial leadership programmes are delivering learning in line with current challenges and with an understanding that leadership has evolved from authoritarianism to one of facilitating a debate. Necessarily therefore learning leadership skills is complex. Lessons are learnt over a lifetime from many sources. The need to supplement with an academic understanding of management skills and leadership is wholly agreed. Individuals will learn best when they choose the appropriate mechanism for that – many will choose master degrees and other approved academic programmes to allow for migration across sectors. Most leaders will also be paying attention to their learning through conferences, Tedtalks, eLearning etc. In the previous question you ask about direct entry – this could only be consistent as a way of thinking if we allow that we want people to learn in a way that suits them.

“Sheepdipping” groups of people through one gateway into learning has not been successful in the past and is a way of removing diversity of thought.

The need for consistency in operational command decision making especially at strategic manager level are not questioned in this response. However, the multi-agency MAGIC programme deliver the strategic command competencies required, alongside in-house refreshers and development available from specialist providers now.



Q11: To what extent do you agree/disagree that completion of the proposed 21st century leadership programme should be mandatory before becoming an assistant chief fire officer or above?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree **Strongly disagree**

See answer above - we wholly disagree with mandating learning. The Police use this approach, and it has not solved the issues of leadership in policing. Anything which is seen a hoop to go through is not conducive to embracing the experience.

We could nationally agree a person specification for Assistant Chief to Chief with clear expectations of experience, knowledge and skills and then work to get the right people applying who meet the criteria. How they have met the criteria should bring the richness and diversity of candidates we need to select the right people – everyone coming through one way has not helped in the past and it won't now. It also precludes the idea that chief officers may come from other sectors – are we saying they would need to do the course even when they have proved they have the knowledge from working in much more complex local government environments?

Smarter Use of Data

Q12: To what extent do you agree/disagree that each of the activities outlined above are high priorities for helping improve the use and quality of fire and rescue service data?

- A national data analytics capability.
- Data-focused training.
- Consistent approaches to structuring data
- Clear expectations for data governance
- Securing data-sharing agreements.

Strongly agree **Agree** Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

We support the creation of a national data analytics function, using an expanded and resilient incident recording system which the NFCC should own rather than the Home Office. Interested parties such as the HMICFRS and Home Office should have access to it in real time, to reduce data requests made to FRSs. The incident recording system itself needs to be flexible enough



to reflect the range of functions and incidents that FRS do and will attend.

There is a need for robust data sharing agreements to be in place. If pseudonymised health data is being drawn in for risk assessment processes, the health sector already has these processes in place and they do not need to be replicated. Sharing person level data, as happened with shielding records during COVID can be achieved with data sharing protocols in place. Expectations around good data governance, data impact assessment and structuring of data is simply a statement that the sector needs to reach to the likes of the Office of the Information Commissioner for support as the guidance is all out on the internet and available. There is also much we can learn from the Health sector in terms of data protection and repurposing. Again there is no need to reinvent something for fire and rescue services.

Q13: What other activities, beyond those listed above, would help improve the use and quality of fire and rescue service data? Please give the reasons for your response.

The issues listed are the critical issues.

Research

Q14: To what extent do you agree/disagree that each of the activities outlined above are high priorities for improving the use and quality of fire evidence and research?

- Collaborating
- Commissioning
- Conducting
- Collating

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Nationally commissioned research on behalf of the sector, using the university research sector where appropriate, has long been something Kent has advocated. Having an international library in fire related research would also be of huge benefit to the sector both nationally and internationally.



Q15: What other activities, beyond those listed above, would help improve the use and quality of evidence and research on fire and other hazards? Please provide the reasons for your responses.

No comment

Ethics and Culture

Q16: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the creation of a statutory code of ethics for services in England?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

Placing the Code on a statutory footing feels an unnecessary step. We have added adherence to our own code of ethics [and the national code] to contracts of employment which achieves the same outcome. It would be easier perhaps to amend the national framework to say that FRS must have regard to the national code when it is next amended.

We also need to be clear on what problem we are trying to cure – ethical standards are one small aspect of a cultural change programme.

Q17: To what extent do you agree/disagree that placing a code of ethics on a statutory basis would better embed ethical principles in services than the present core code of ethics?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

Q18: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the duty to ensure services act in accordance with the proposed statutory code should be placed on operationally independent chief fire officers?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree



The organisation is a product of its people. Writing policy would therefore be done by people who have signed up to the code's principles. It is difficult to see what placing a duty on the employer, if that becomes the chief executive/chief fire officer as corporation sole, would achieve.

Q19: To what extent do you agree/disagree with making enforcement of the proposed statutory code an employment matter for chief fire officers to determine within their services?

Strongly agree Agree **Neither agree nor disagree** Disagree Strongly disagree

We do not believe a proposed statutory code is a necessary step for government to take. Recruitment, disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures are all enshrined in law and are the vehicles for poor or unethical behaviour.

Q20: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the creation of a fire and rescue service oath for services in England?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

Q21: Please give the reasons for your response.

We do not support the creation of an oath, given the code of ethics. Swearing an allegiance on the day of employment does not mean that person will live those values throughout their career. The appalling cases within the Police Service, such as the Sarah Everard case, and more recently with the Security Services, demonstrates that this step will not force ethical behaviour by all employees at all times. This comes from engagement, role-modelling and challenge by colleagues if standards drop.

The oaths that have a historical significance, such as the Hippocratic oath for doctors or the oath for barristers, gives meaning and richness to the individual in making that commitment. The oath for the fire service would need to be going for twenty years plus to finally feel like it was purposeful and had meaning. Again what problem is this trying to cure given the code of



ethics.

Q22: To what extent do you agree/disagree that an Oath would embed the principles of the Code of Ethics amongst fire and rescue authority employees?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

For the reasons above this is better enforced via the code of conduct embedded in contracts of employment.

Q23: To what extent do you agree/disagree with an Oath being mandatory for all employees?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

We need to be very careful here – contracts of employment are inclusive of required behaviours as already expressed in person specifications, leadership frameworks and value statements in each fire and rescue service. The wording of the oath could only support commitment to those, or there is room for a contradiction in expectations. As people would be signing their contract, what purpose does it serve and further we would argue, as it has no historical meaning, that it underlines a distrust right from the start with new entrants.

Q24: To what extent do you agree/disagree that breach of the fire and rescue service oath should be dealt with as an employment matter?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

A breach of the code of ethics is already an employment matter in Kent.



Q25: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the five areas listed above are priorities for professionalising fire and rescue services?

- Leadership
- Data
- Research
- Ethics
- Clear Expectations

Strongly agree **Agree** Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Q26: What other activities, beyond the five listed above, could help to professionalise fire and rescue services?

As a general comment on this section of the White Paper, describing the sector not being professional already does not help maintain public trust and confidence in the sector.

Independent Strategic Oversight

Q27: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the creation of an independent College of Fire and Rescue to lead the professionalisation of fire and rescue services?

Strongly agree Agree **Neither agree nor disagree** Disagree Strongly disagree

Q28: Please provide your reasons for your response

There is an implication that this might be the Fire Service College – if this is the case then disagree as it's a private sector owned company. If it can be established as a department within the College of Policing and subsume the Fire Standards board, we can see it might have value. Working with the College of Policing we can share good practice, join eLearning initiatives and work on the evolution of the fire sector in a more objective way. Equally it could reside within the fire sector only.



Governance

Q29: To what extent do you agree/disagree that Government should transfer responsibility for fire and rescue services in England to a single elected individual?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

The direction of travel mooted in the White Paper is noted.

In the context of Kent, the fire and rescue authority provides good governance and oversight of political issues. It is largely an apolitical body, managing by consensus between political parties. There is no example of an action recommended by officers which has been subsequently not progressed at Authority level. This has been our lived experience as officers and Members since the creation of the Authority in 1998. We have already reduced the number of meetings to the minimum viable, and added an Audit and Governance Committee chaired by the Leader of the largest opposition group (Labour) to increase scrutiny. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent sits on the Authority. The cost of administration is good value, at £76k (actual 21/2) in Member allowances, and travel expenses for travel to meetings. Our view is that the CFA model currently provides good value for money for customers in Kent and Medway.

The issue of whether a better model would be one directly elected person is therefore a political choice, not one based on efficiency. It would be for the Authority to consider and discuss with the standing Police and Crime Commissioner at the time, as the White paper does not suggest change will be mandated.

Q30: What factors should be considered when transferring fire governance to a directly elected individual?

Please provide the reasons for your response.

The issue of local political will should be considered and respected.

The outcomes of inspections by the HMICFRS which do look at pace of change should be considered.

An agreed business case as is currently the position for any change of governance.



Q31: Where Mayoral Combined Authorities already exist, to what extent do you agree/disagree that fire and rescue functions should be transferred directly to these MCAs for exercise by the Mayor?

Strongly agree Agree **Neither agree nor disagree** Disagree Strongly disagree

Q32: To what extent do you agree/disagree that Government should transfer responsibility for fire and rescue services in England to police and crime commissioners?

Strongly agree Agree **Neither agree nor disagree** Disagree Strongly disagree

If at a moment in the future, the political will and consensus to make this change was present in Kent, and a business case, then it is something the Authority would consider in partnership with the sitting Police and Crime Commissioner.

Q33: Apart from combined authority mayors and police and crime commissioners, is there anyone else who we could transfer fire governance that aligns with the principles set out above?

Yes

No

Q34: If yes, please explain other options and your reasons for proposing them.

Arguably, a role of “fire only commissioner” could be agreed between the constituent authorities in CFA areas, and elected to, to an agreed cycle. This is likely to be prohibitively expensive, and the politics of fire is much less contentious than that of a local authority or police force. If the local political consensus is not to alter the existing arrangements at the present time, we hope the government will respect this.

As an alternative, mayoral arrangements as suggested for wider county areas under the levelling up white paper is an alternative model. It is noted that this would subsume the role of police and crime commissioner into its functions, along with all other local government services.



Q35: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the legal basis for fire and rescue authorities could be strengthened and clarified?

Strongly agree Agree **Neither agree nor disagree** Disagree Strongly disagree

Q36: Please provide the reasons for your response.

CIPFA guidance already provides clear guidance for local authorities to apply to their governance processes. A refreshed national framework stating that Authorities must have regard to such guidance could achieve the same ends desired in the White Paper.

Q37: To what extent do you agree/disagree that boundary changes should be made so that fire and rescue service areas and police force/combined authorities (where present) areas are coterminous?

Strongly agree **Agree** Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

There is no contention that there are too many fire and rescue services in England. This has been Kent's consistent position since the first round of Fire CPA in 2005. The same issues of lack of corporate capacity identified then are still playing out. The same services in the lower quartile of performance largely remain there. If the government wants to make a clear and visible change, then reducing the overall number is an important step. If these match LRF boundaries that would make other functional change easier. From that step, coalitions of the willing are more likely to occur. The biggest issue to overcome will as ever be council tax equalisation.



Q38: To what extent do you agree/disagree with ring-fencing the operational fire budget within fire and rescue services run by county councils and unitary authorities?

Strongly agree Agree **Neither agree nor disagree** Disagree Strongly disagree

Q39: Please provide the reasons for your response.

We do not have a view on this question as a CFA.

Q40. To what extent do you agree with this proposed approach (as outlined in the table above)?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

Q41. Do you have any other comments to further support your answer?

Chief Executives/Chief Fire Officers already have total operational independence to deploy resources to an incident in real time. The description of the roles of the officer corp and Members set out in the White Paper precisely reflects the way the Authority is set up in Kent.

The issue is therefore not one of “operational independence”, which implies in its name dealing with a presenting issue on the day. The issues is really achieving better and more consistent clarity for Members and officers across the sector on what is a political issue and what is an issue that should be delegated to officers, as part of a refreshed set of scheme of delegations. It is akin to how delegated powers operate around planning decisions in local authorities.

Operational Independence as a concept is a reaction to the different applications of governance across the sector. As an example, The London Fire Commissioner already has total operational independence written into their job role yet to enter into a contract of over £150k needs political sign off. Almost all procurements in an organisation the size of London would cross this threshold, even for the most mundane business items such as Microsoft licences or stationery.

Work on a national scheme of delegations was started by the NFCC on this, but paused when the likelihood of a white paper became clear. The proposals made do not address the issue at hand.



On the issue given in the paper of the closure of a fire station – this will always be a political issue, as Members will receive local political pressure to support or oppose from their constituents, should they also happen to sit on the Authority. We feel issues such as these come down to the skill of the Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer in promoting evidence based decisions to Members so that what is the right business decision is made, accepting that it may be a difficult one to take politically. In 2012, Kent took the decision to close 10 fire stations, and remove 11 fire engines from service. This was achieved with support across the political spectrum and on the basis of a full risk assessment and data assessment process.

Our point in raising this is that significant business change can be achieved in the existing governance mechanisms, where there is a skilled chief executive/chief fire officer, and a strong relationship between them and the Chair of the Authority, and a data and evidence driven approach to change.

Q42. Are there any factors we should consider when implementing these proposals?

Again local political will and the outcomes of HMICFRS inspections looking at pace of change within an individual FRS should be considered.

Q43: What factors should we consider when giving chief fire officers operational independence? Please provide the reasons for your opinions.

As already stated, we believe chief executive/chief fire officers have operational independence already. What they don't have in all cases is appropriate Member/officer relations, and a modern scheme of delegations which keeps day to day business out of the political domain, but allows for appropriate political scrutiny on policy issues.

Legal Entity of Chief Fire Officers

Q44: What factors should we consider should we make chief fire officers corporations sole?

We do not support this action at this time



Q45: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the responsibility for strategic and operational planning should be better distinguished?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

This is in our view an unnecessary step. The CRMP is the manifestation of the political priorities for the coming years for the Authority and is subject to consultation. The Authority's business plan is a more tactical plan owned on a day to day basis by officers. The Authority itself does not have the capacity to own and deliver a plan, nor monitor it. It relies on the officer cohort to do this. The only way it could would be to attach officers to the Authority and this feel like an unnecessary step in what is a far less complex area than policing or adult social care.

Q46: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the strategic plan should be the responsibility of the fire and rescue authority?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

See above

Q47: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the operational plan should be the responsibility of the chief fire officer?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree **Disagree** Strongly disagree

Q48: Please provide the reasons for your response.

See above



We hope these comments are helpful.

Nick Chard

Chair – Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains statement 21/22

This statement sets out the steps taken during 2021/22 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.

Our ambition

Modern slavery is sadly all around us, but often hidden from sight and difficult to spot. Many victims also do not identify that way. The [2021 UK annual report on modern slavery](#) confirms that since the Modern Slavery Act became law, the number of live police operations has increased from 188 in December 2016, to 3,335 in August 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic played a part in increasing and creating new opportunities for human trafficking, and, as the report sets out, is believed to have negatively impacted referral numbers as a result of the restrictions¹. Measuring the impact is hard, so this number is no doubt much higher and increasing.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has forced many innocent people out of their homes, fleeing their war-torn country. Whilst there has been a huge global effort to support the innocent victims of the conflict, the dreadful reality is that many join the vulnerable people in society who are at risk of harm.

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

This statement shares the actions we have taken so far, and our commitment on what we intend to do to help combat this offence. We are proud that we have made a good start, however, we know that there is still much to do and it will take time to stamp out Modern Slavery, wherever it exists, for good.

Who are we?

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

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

The Authority is formed of over 1,447 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. We have 21 Safe and Well Officers who provide a reassuring service to both the public and any member of our teams who may have encountered someone identified either through operational incidents or Safe and Well visits as being 'at risk.' The team works closely with other agencies such as Social Services, Mental Health teams, Local Authorities, Housing Associations and the Police to put high risk intervention measures in place, often at very short notice. The team made 10,883 visits in Kent and Medway throughout 21/22.

We also have 11 Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs). Our safeguarding processes are established to make sure our Authority helps to protect the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk as our teams come into contact with them during the course of their work. We have a Safeguarding Policy and guidance that includes activities that are undertaken to protect specific children, young people and adults who are suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse harm or neglect. Our teams have raised 309 safeguarding cases between April 2011 and March 2022.

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

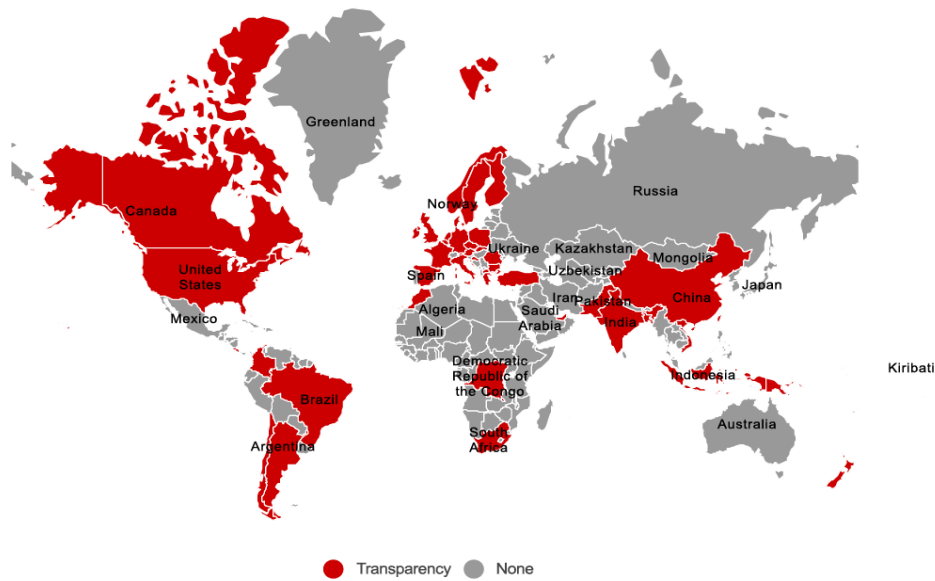
We are committed to establishing a culture of listening and understanding to encourage everyone to be curious and compassionate, which not only helps us all to value difference and be kind, but our differences support us to help our customers and to be able to identify when someone is at risk of harm.

We don't just comply with the relevant laws and practices on how we should treat colleagues, customers and anyone who comes into contact with our organisation, we extend our role beyond compliance by ensuring zero-tolerance in all of our business practices and behaviours of everyone within our organisation and our networks.

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

Our sourcing map

Our average annual spend with third parties is £20m and we currently source a variety of goods and services from 49 countries worldwide (an increase from 28 as published in our [20/21 statement](#)).



List of countries we source goods and services from

- United Kingdom
- Argentina
- Australia
- Austria
- Bangladesh
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- India
- Indonesia
- Italy
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Madagascar
- Mexico
- Monaco
- Morocco
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Pakistan
- Papua New Guinea
- Poland
- Republic of Ireland
- Romania
- Singapore
- Slovakia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sweden
- Taiwan
- Turkey
- UAE
- USA
- Vietnam

Our Progress: What are we doing about Modern Slavery?

Our suppliers

Our sourcing map illustrates our extensive global supplier base, and, given the current global supply issues impacting all sectors, is an evolving picture as we navigate the challenging landscape in terms of continuity of critical supply of the goods and services that we need for our front-line. Our map has expanded substantially and this is a reflection of the work that the Authority is undertaking in order to have greater transparency in our supply chains.

The issues with supply mean that our risk-based approach to due diligence is crucial now more than ever. As a publically funded organisation, we ensure absolute transparency in all of our purchasing decisions and practices. We made a promise in our last [Statement](#) that all of our Tier 1 suppliers will be required to sign up to the [Modern Slavery Assessment Tool](#). We have made great progress in this area. Over £27.7m worth of contracts with suppliers across all categories¹ are now working with us to publish their performance against key measures on the Tool. The level of information shared with us is proportionate to the critical nature of the goods and services that each supplier provides us, and the level of risk of Modern Slavery associated with the specific markets they operate within.

We continue to 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 are also progressing with the block-chain analysis with our critical personal protective clothing supplier, which has been a process of learning for both the Authority and supplier. It is fair to say that there is more work to be done in this area, which has highlighted just how complex the audit and traceability processes are when dealing with an extensive supply chain for critical goods. It has also been made more complicated due to the increasing fragile nature of the markets over the past year. However, the results are so far positive, and the learning and outcome from this work will be shared nationally with all Fire and Rescue Services across the UK.

Supplier Code of Conduct

Our Authority works in a responsible, ethical and open way and we expect the same from our suppliers. We have therefore introduced a Supplier Code of Conduct [link](#) which sets out the standards, values and behaviours we expect from our suppliers, asking them to confirm that they will work with us to protect and respect human rights. Working together with shared values and purpose will undoubtedly deliver positive change for our communities.

¹ Fleet, Information Communications Technology, Facilities Management and Construction, Ops equipment, Clothing/Personal Protective Equipment and Professional Services

Policies and controls

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 G27 – How to raise a safeguarding concern.
 - Guidance Document G28 – 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.

Process and risk

We have developed a safeguarding concern referral form, and have signposted all of our people to the process of raising a concern through guidance published on our intranet, mandatory safeguarding training and posters that are on show in all of our buildings that provides a process flow diagram for raising a concern. We are continually reviewing the referral process to ensure that first accounts are recorded by the person who has identified the concern. The information requested on the referral form is consistent with other partners to ensure that the required information such as the concerns and feelings and wishes of the person are documented at the earliest opportunity.

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

Training and awareness

- **All of our teams:**

A two year training plan was launched in March 2022. Modern slavery and human trafficking is included within the main areas of our mandatory safeguarding training to which is rolled out to all colleagues. 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 started October 2021 and will be reviewed annually.

- **Our front-line:**
Our Safeguarding Manager and Customer Safety Lead attended the National Fire Chief Council's train the trainer session on fire service bespoke safeguarding in October 2021, after which, a training package for Level 3 and 4 was delivered to 50 strategic level members of the team.

- **Commercial and Procurement:**
The Commercial and Procurement team is in the process of their CIPS Ethical Procurement and Supply E-Learning. This includes any member of the team that is not CIPS qualified but has responsibility for sourcing or supplier relationship management. Once 100% of the team are certified, the Authority will sign the CIPS Corporate Code of Ethics and Ethics statement, which means that we shall be listed on the CIPS Corporate Ethical Register and is our commitment to procure ethically and to take proactive steps to eradicate malpractice from our supply chains. The statement also confirms our commitment that we will continue to ensure our people are equipped with the knowledge and understanding to make this happen. This will be renewed annually.

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

Collaboration and stakeholder engagement

Compliance and positive steps towards change relies on teamwork and our partnerships are integral for the Authority in addressing modern slavery risks. We have had many successes in terms of intervention as a result of multi-agency collaboration as outlined in the number of safeguarding cases we have identified.

Key organisations and initiatives we continue to 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 KMFRA Safeguarding Manager |
| The Salvation Army | 24/7 support | Modern Slavery Helpline available 24/7. | Support provided via the helpline if concerns are identified and further advice needed. |
| Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority | Non-Departmental Public Body set up to protect vulnerable and exploited workers. | Investigate reports of worker exploitation and illegal activity such as human trafficking, | Point of reference for knowledge, skills and experience in terms of all aspects |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| | | forced labour and illegal labour provision, as well as offences under the National Minimum Wage and Employment Agencies Acts. | 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. |

Looking ahead

Combatting modern slavery is hugely important to our Authority. It is a distressing reality. We believe its everyone's responsibility to change that, and we know our Authority can be a positive force in that cause.

We are committed to ensuring that there are no forms of modern slavery in our supply chains or business operations. It is our responsibility to continually improve transparency; to seek out, identify and resolve problems and risks; to regularly review our procurement practices and to collaborate with others to protect the rights of workers, particularly those who are most vulnerable to abuses such as modern slavery.

As we gain more visibility of our supply chains and as the medium to long term impact of the current global crisis materialises, we recognise that we will need to continually review our efforts to ensure that we mitigate negative human rights impacts on vulnerable people in our supply chains. We must remain particularly aware of emerging risks and be alert to the dynamic nature of modern slavery.

Our commitments for next year are to continue to audit Tier 1 suppliers and, if feasible, start to expand to Tier 2 suppliers, working to gain greater visibility throughout the supply chain. We will continue to take steps to implement our human rights due diligence processes, in line with all current and forthcoming legislation, ensuring that our contractual terms and conditions align to all relevant legislation, and we will continue to work with our suppliers to

ensure that the stated procurement criteria on Modern Slavery are met, providing greater awareness of the living wage throughout our supply chains. Our programme of training and awareness will continue to be updated and rolled out annually, ensuring that our people are fully aware of what they can do to help tackle modern slavery in their daily lives and we hope to proudly carry the CIPS Corporate Ethical Procurement and Supply Mark to demonstrate that our knowledge and focus on ethical procurement remains current.

On behalf of the Authority, we confirm our commitment to working with not just our people, but also with our suppliers, customers and many other stakeholders to continue to drive change and help make modern slavery a thing of the past.

Signed

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

Commercial and Procurement



Supplier Code of Conduct – Working Together

| | | | |
|--------|-------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Author | Tina Butler | . | Head of Commercial and Procurement |
|--------|-------------|---|------------------------------------|

Introduction

The Authority's purpose and values shape everything we do. We work hard to be inclusive and creative and to be a place of work where trust is key in an open and positive environment. We are authentic and care to deliver the best for our Customers. This Code sets out our commitment to ensuring that our suppliers work with us to apply the same values and standards across all supply chains. Together, we must believe in them, put them into practice and be ethical in everything we do.

Shared integrity

We take issues such as equality, human rights, labour standards, environmental management, and bribery and corruption incredibly seriously. Keeping our communities safe from harm is at the very heart of our organisation and this extends to everyone that comes into contact with us. We want to be clear and straightforward regarding our expectations about staying true to our values prior to entering into any supply agreement and throughout our contractual relationships.

Who does this apply to?

This Code applies to any third party providing goods or services to the Authority. It's really important to us that our suppliers work in the same way. This Code will help our suppliers get to know how important ethics are to our Authority and how closely we follow them when choosing or working with suppliers. It will ensure that we are all on the same page and, working together, we all achieve best practice, and meet important laws and guidelines. We need our suppliers to maintain and uphold these standards throughout their supply chains.

Embracing difference

Equality, diversity, inclusion and fairness are values that shape us an organisation, they mean more to us than just words. We are proud of our diverse and inclusive place to work. A place that is free from discrimination and ensures that everyone feels valued, providing products for our people that are designed with diversity in mind. Together, we need to ensure that we meet the requirements of equality legislation, not just because we have to, but because we want to. We rely on our suppliers to make sure every workplace is totally free from harassment, bullying or any kind of offensive behaviour.

We expect our suppliers to join us in creating an inclusive environment that encourages diversity that flows throughout all supply chains. We want our suppliers to ensure that at every part of your business, including supply chain management and procurement is looked at, and, if you haven't already, implement your own equality and diversity training to create a culture of learning and opportunities to explore being better.

People matter

Our suppliers must be just as committed as we are to protect and respect human rights and essential labour standards. Our Modern Slavery Policy and annual Statement makes this clear. Everyone

deserves and has the legal right to work in safe and healthy working environments. On our sites, all suppliers must follow our Health and Safety Policy.

Everyone that works for our suppliers and their supply chains must have complete personal freedom and freedom of movement, must have access to sound grievance procedures that everyone can use without fear of prejudice or retaliation and work to contracts that meet all Minimum Wage and Working Time Regulations, including for overtime. The Authority has a right to audit our suppliers and supply chains if we spot any signs of forced, compulsory, bonded, indentured or prison labour. We need you to tell us straight away if you find evidence of Modern Slavery in your supply chain to ensure that we can take the most appropriate and immediate action.

Environmental Impact: reducing our collective footprint

The Authority has made a pledge to be carbon neutral by 2030. We owe it to our communities and our planet to keep our environmental impact minimal. We want our suppliers and supply chains to tread softly with us and make a positive difference wherever possible. At the very basic level, we expect you to meet the terms of relevant laws, regulations and standards. Beyond that, like us, we'd like to see how you are measuring the impact you are having on the environment, giving yourselves targets for improvements in areas such as pollution, lower emissions, cleaner technology, increased recycling and approaches to saving water and energy.

Protecting data

The Authority is in no doubt that our suppliers take data just as seriously as we do and in doing so, we all need to comply with the same legislation and regulations on data protection, privacy and personal information. This includes the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. At a minimum we expect suppliers to have in place appropriate protections for any personal data we flow to them as part of our engagement with them. We also expect a suitable privacy policy to be in place, and arrangements to identify and notify us immediately of any potential or suspected data breaches. All our supply agreements include details regarding obligations in relation to data. If you spot anything suspicious or unusual, we rely on you to get in touch as soon as you are aware of the issue.

Compliance with this Code

The Authority believes that a collaborative approach to relationships with our suppliers is key to successfully working towards a shared purpose and values. It is therefore important that the detail of this Code is read and understood to ensure absolute compliance.

This Code will need to be updated from time to time to reflect changes in law, regulations or standards, but also because the Authority never sits still, particularly when it comes to providing the best service and equal treatment to all those that come into contact with us.

Have a question about the Code or need to raise an issue highlighted in the Code? Our Commercial and Procurement Team will be happy to help; procurement@kent.fire-uk.org

Supporting Information

| Details | Link to material |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Modern Slavery Policy* | Modern Slavery Policy |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Modern Slavery Statement | Commercial and Procurement Team Kent Fire and Rescue Service (fire-uk.org) |
| EDI Policy | Equality in Procurement at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Kent Fire and Rescue Service (fire-uk.org) |
| Speak Up Policy * | Speak Up Policy |
| Environmental Policy | Available from Q2 22/23 |
| Data Protection Policy * | Data Protection and Information Security Policy |
| Health and Safety Policy * | Health and Wellbeing Policy |

**available upon request*

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Document Audit Information | |
| Senior Officer Accountable | Tina Butler |
| Authorised by | Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Direct enquiries to | procurement@kent.fire-uk.org |
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| Amendments required to | None |
| Related documents [if any] | None |
| Replaced documents | None |
| Security classification | None |
| Version No | 1.0 |
| Version change summary | New policy |

People and Learning



Social Media Policy

| | | | |
|--------|-----------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Author | Dominika Kimber | The current job title of the main author. | People, Change and Strategy Manager |
|--------|-----------------|---|-------------------------------------|

Introduction

We recognise social media is a key communications tool and many colleagues enjoy using platforms in their personal time. Compliance with this policy safeguards us from reputational damage and protects you from the less positive aspects of social media, such as trolling and hate crime.

This policy applies to everyone who works and volunteers for us, including all colleagues, volunteers, and stakeholders including consultants, contractors, and any agency staff. In addition, all Members of the Authority are encouraged to follow the principles set out within this policy, but are also reminded that the code of conduct of their respective authorities applies to them.

The purpose of this guidance is to encourage and enable everyone to use social and other digital media appropriately, and to remove any risk associated with identifying your role and employment with KFRS online.

Legal Consequences

The law surrounding use of social media is very complex and it balances obligations placed on you under your contract of employment with your rights to a private life and the freedom of expression.

Key statutory acts relating to this policy include:

Equality Act 2010

You can be deemed to have acted 'in the course of your employment' if your conduct and actions are closely related to your employment. If your acts cannot be regarded as part of your ordinary course of employment or are in breach of our procedures, these will be seen as unauthorised, and you are likely to be liable.

Human Rights Act 1998

Article 8 gives a 'right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence'. Case law suggests that everyone has a reasonable expectation of privacy in the workplace.

Article 10 European Convention on Human Rights provides, that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions.

Although you have freedom of expression, you also have a duty to behave responsibly and to respect other people's rights.

Public authorities may restrict this right if they can show that their action is lawful, necessary, and proportionate for example if you express views that encourage racial or religious hatred.

Investigatory Powers (Interception by Businesses etc for Monitoring and Record-keeping Purposes) Regulations 2018

The Investigatory Powers Regulations 2018 allow employers to investigate or detect the unauthorised use of internal telecommunication system, including internet use. If these steps are necessary, you will be told that monitoring of the internet will occur.

Data Protection Act 2018

The [ICO Employment Practices Code](#) states that employers must be clear with their people if they intend to monitor social media accounts. Covert monitoring will only be justified in very exceptional situations. We will not routinely monitor personal social media accounts unless such monitoring forms part of an investigation into allegations of breach of our policies or Code of Ethical Conduct.

General Data Protection Regulation

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires employers to be transparent about the personal data that they hold and how it is used.

Information obtained from monitoring a colleague's internet use will normally amount to personal data. If the organisation considers it justifiable and reasonable to monitor a personal social media account, we will inform the colleague of this fact, the legal basis for processing as well as what type of monitoring is carried out, including the nature, extent, and reasons for any monitoring. An impact assessment will also be carried out where processing is likely to result in a high risk to a colleague's rights and freedoms.

Disciplinary Policy, Bullying and Harassment Policy and Code of Ethical Conduct

Organisation's expectations and standards of conduct as outlined within the Disciplinary Policy, Bullying and Harassment Policy and Code of Ethical Conduct, form an integral part of the Social Media Policy and will be considered in investigation of any alleged breaches.

Service Policy

Service policy, digital and social media can help us to communicate and support our customers and how we engage with them on important issues. Through social media we reach many different customers, and we strive to ensure that our messages and content is inclusive and relevant to everyone. Digital and social media allows us to have conversations and receive feedback on the services we provide, community events, safety campaigns, and any service news. We share content that is aligned to our values and the role we play in educating and keeping our customers safe.

Using social media comes with great responsibility as those who use it are in effect publishers in their own right, and therefore are subject to publishing law, including defamation and libel.

Information

Definition of social media

1. For this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media, including websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking in a public forum. This policy applies to all social media platforms, including but not limited to; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, NextDoor, TikTok, Snap Chat, LinkedIn, Facebook Workplace, WhatsApp and other instant messenger technologies.

Identifying yourself as a Kent Fire and Rescue Service employee on social media

2. Nobody who works or volunteers for us is permitted to state on their personal social media accounts/platforms, their link to the service. Do not include any mention of Kent Fire and Rescue Service in your profile/account names, bios or imagery depicting Kent Fire and Rescue Service uniform, personal protective equipment, vehicles or anything else which identifies that you work or volunteer for the service. We have a duty of care to minimise the risk of colleagues and volunteers

being exposed to work-related online trolling, and not disclosing your link with the service significantly reduces that risk. This does not however restrict you from engaging with, or sharing content from, the official corporate Kent Fire and Rescue Service accounts to your own platforms.

3. The only social media platforms where you can identify yourself as working for Kent Fire and Rescue Service, is LinkedIn and Facebook Workplace - professional networking sites which are representative of employment/volunteering and your career.
4. Nobody who works or volunteers for us is permitted to discuss incidents or other service business on any social media platform – other than within team instant messaging groups set up for the purpose of discussing work matters (see more about instant messaging, such as WhatsApp below).
5. Your contribution to professional discussions on platforms set up for this purpose, for example on the closed National Fire Chiefs' Council Workplace Facebook page, is important for sharing professional views and progressing professional debates. However, you must always remember that you are representing our views and values.

WhatsApp and other messenger technologies

6. If you are using a group instant messaging platform like WhatsApp or any other similar technology, for the purpose of communicating with your colleagues outside of working hours, or to discuss work related matters, these communications can be seen as work related and carried out in the course of employment. Therefore, you must abide by the rules in this policy when communicating with colleagues using such platforms. Consequently, as far as reasonably practicable, you should always ensure that you use corporate communications channels for any official written business. In addition, personal data about KFRS colleagues (including volunteers) is not permitted be shared on WhatsApp or any other messaging tools. Personal data relates to information specifically about an individual used to learn something about them in relation to the workplace and or make decisions about their employment. This personal data must only be shared in writing over organisational channels such as the Service's Outlook email system. This is to ensure that colleagues' personal data is processed in accordance with the requirements of the UK's General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and that KFRS can access that personal data.
7. If you use instant messaging platforms to communicate with your workplace colleagues, you are also expected to:
 - Be mindful of the time when you communicate any official work-related information and respect the fact that some users might be resting or be off duty. Do not issue instructions outside of ordinary working hours, unless in the case of emergency or if the group is specifically created for the purpose of out of hours communications.
 - Intervene if you disagree with any content that you feel does not meet the expectations outlined in this policy.
 - Not to exclude colleagues from unofficial instant messaging platform discussions such as on WhatsApp, which are created for groups or teams, for work related or social purposes, as this might be seen as discriminatory.
 - Report to your manager immediately if a message intended for a personal recipient is unintentionally shared on a work instant messaging group, to avoid the possibility of it being misinterpreted or cause any offence.
 - Remember that the messages you send can be used as evidence in tribunals or court.
 - Before sharing any content in an instant messaging group environment, consider:
 - Is it necessary?
 - Is it appropriate for the audience?
 - Is the time of day you are looking to send a message appropriate or fair?

Code of Ethical Conduct

8. It is very important to remember that all users of social media are bound by the Code of Ethical Conduct. The code sets out the core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality as well as the standards of behaviour we expect at work and can be found on the intranet. These should be observed when using social media.
9. You should be aware that the provisions of the Code of Ethical Conduct and this policy continue to apply outside of yours or the recipients' working hours, which should not be used as an indicator of when your social media activity could be considered as private.
10. The creation of work/team related social media profiles is not permitted. The corporate Kent Fire and Rescue Service social media accounts are the only profiles that should exist to officially represent the organisation.
11. If you use social media as part of your job (this should only be members of the engagement team), you must adhere to the following principles:
 - Make sure that the communication benefits the organisation.
 - Use social media in both an ethical and lawful manner.
 - Obtain engagement team lead's permission before embarking on a public campaign using social media.
 - Sense check the content before you publish anything using THINK to ensure that it your language does not offend and is supportive of difference and your content is: True, Helpful, Inclusive, Necessary and Kind.

Using social media in a professional capacity

12. You are only permitted to disclose your link to Kent Fire and Rescue Service on LinkedIn and in professional networking groups. Any communications made in a professional capacity through these social media channels must not:
 - Breach confidentiality, e.g., reveal confidential intellectual property or discuss our internal workings. This includes information that refers to an individual or information about an individual that would render them recognisable within the description.
 - Do anything that could be considered discriminatory or bullying/harassing in nature, e.g., offensive/derogatory remarks, posting offensive images or any posting considered likely to incite violence or offend others, breach the law, or condone unlawful activity. This includes gossip, banter or use of inappropriate language or emojis in messages, pictures or videos, including communications with workplace colleagues via IM platforms, during or outside working hours.
 - Bring the organisation into disrepute, e.g., by criticising a stakeholder, partner or customer.
 - Breach copyright, e.g., using images without consent, making defamatory or libellous comments about individuals or other organisations, or posting images or links to inappropriate content
 - Any other behaviour which has potential to damage the reputation of Kent Fire and Rescue Service.
 - Breach of data protection e.g., disclosing information about individuals without their consent or processing personal data in such way that would breach data protection principles.
 - Breach data protection of the organisation or anyone who is associated with us.

Using social media in a personal capacity

13. Social media is a public forum, and the same considerations apply to its use as would apply to speaking in public or writing for a publication either in an official or private capacity. In social media the boundaries between professional and personal are often more blurred, so it's important to be particularly careful as boundaries which apply at work might be different to those which are appropriate on social media, where your audience is much wider and beyond your control and your posts are not only permanent but can also be shared/re-posted.

14. You should be aware of privacy limitations when posting material on social media and the extent to which that information is in the public domain. Once posted, the material, although only shared with limited followers or friends, can still be published and copied elsewhere. Thus, the posting could be shared more widely without the original poster's permission or knowledge. You are responsible for configuring your own privacy settings and reviewing them regularly.
15. When using social media in a personal capacity, you must be aware that your activity can damage the reputation of the organisation if you are recognised as being one of our employees or if your activity is considered relevant to your employment or in breach of Kent Fire and Rescue Service's Code of Ethical Conduct. This could also lead to your dismissal.
16. You are not permitted to state that you work for Kent Fire and Rescue Service on your social media profiles and must never discuss your work activities, e.g., discussing an operational incident or customer.
17. You should also consider your own personal security. This includes content which might compromise your safety, for example information about your hobbies or leisure activities.
18. You should not disclose official information on social media nor should you take part in commenting on any political or other public activity which could compromise or might be seen to compromise the government of the day or any future government.
19. You should make it clear that your views are your own, however the use of a disclaimer will not override the need for you to follow the principles outlined in this policy or offer you any protection in case your activity is considered as disciplinary misconduct. Serious breaches of these principles could be considered to be gross misconduct and would result in disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.
20. Any communications in a personal capacity through social media (please refer to the definition of social media) must not:
 - Breach confidentiality, e.g., revealing confidential intellectual property, personal information about individuals, or discuss our internal workings.
 - Do anything that could be considered discriminatory or bullying/harassing in nature, e.g., offensive/derogatory remarks, posting offensive images or any posting considered likely to incite violence or offend others, breach the law or condone unlawful activity.
 - Bring the organisation into disrepute, e.g., by criticising any stakeholders, partners, or customers, making defamatory or libellous comments about individuals or other organisations or posting images or links to inappropriate content.
 - Any other behaviour which has potential to damage the reputation of KFRS.
 - Breach of data protection e.g., disclosing information about individuals without their consent or processing personal data in such way that would breach data protection principles.
 - Breach copyright, e.g., using images without consent.
21. You must not encourage behaviour in others through social media that could link to safeguarding issues, e.g., bullying, grooming or exploitation, theft of personal information, encouraging self-harm or violence, or glorifying activities such as excessive drinking or drug-taking. These kinds of post will be investigated and could be considered as gross misconduct which will result in disciplinary action against you and potential dismissal.
22. Complicity with inappropriate posts sent to you e.g., if you are tagged in inappropriate pictures or views which are in breach of expectations outlined within this document and failing to address these comments or re-posting, might be considered as misconduct or gross misconduct and could result in dismissal.
23. You may accept payment or other inducements for your own material on social media as long as it has been produced in your own time; does not relate to your employment with us; and that you have sought and received permission from us to engage in this type of other/outside employment.
24. We reserve the right to request the removal of content from personal accounts if the account or its submission is considered a risk to our reputation or to any of our staff.

25. We are mindful of your right to a private life and this includes your activity on social media, as long as there is no connection between your private life and your employment. For example, if we receive a complaint in relation to your social media activity, we will consider the actual impact of it on our reputation. If we establish a sufficient link between your activity and your employment and risk to our reputation, your conduct will trigger disciplinary investigation and is likely to amount to misconduct or gross misconduct, which could result in dismissal. We might also have a duty to other colleagues to conduct a disciplinary process, for example where bullying or harassment of one colleague by another occurs through social media.

Use of social media in the staff recruitment process

26. The People team and managers should only conduct searches on social media when these are relevant to an applicant's skills, or claims that they have made on their application, e.g., use of social media in a previous role, claim that they have created a site or blog that links to the skills required for the role.
27. There will be no systematic or routine checking of prospective employees' online social media activity prior to, or post, employment. However, once any individual signs their contract of employment they are bound by the principles outlined in this policy and within the Code of Ethical Conduct.

Misuse of social media

28. You should be aware that any use of social media websites through Kent Fire and Rescue Service devices (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under the Disciplinary Policy.
29. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against the individuals concerned and/or Kent Fire and Rescue Service. Everyone should be aware that if misuse is criminal in nature, we will report this to the Police.
30. The uploading, posting, forwarding, or posting of a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, may amount to gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal. (This list is not exhaustive):
- Pornographic material (e.g., writing, pictures, films, or video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature)
 - A false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation.
 - Material which is offensive, obscene, criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to us, our customers or our colleagues.
 - Confidential information about Kent Fire and Rescue Service or our business or any of our staff or customers (without express authority to disseminate).
 - Any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for the colleague or the organisation).
 - Material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.
 - Any other activity that can damage Kent Fire and Rescue Service's reputation or that destroy or is likely to destroy trust and confidence in you.
31. Where evidence of misuse is found a more detailed investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy. This will involve the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary, such information may be handed to the Police in connection with a criminal investigation.

Further Information

32. If you are in any doubt about what you should or should not post on social media, particularly about your work, or if you discover online content that may harm our reputation, you should contact the engagement team.

Appendix A - Top things to remember when using social and digital media.

- ✓ **Common sense:** social media helps us work openly and connect with the people we serve – making adverse or discriminatory comments in what you think is your personal time will have an impact on your work if you are identified as working for Kent Fire and Rescue Service.
- ✓ Adhere to the **Code of Ethical Conduct:** apply the same standards online as are required offline, whether acting in an official or personal capacity.
- ✓ **Doubts?** If in doubt, do not post it.
- ✓ **Accuracy:** check the accuracy and sensitivity of what you are posting before publishing.
- ✓ Always **check who someone is** before responding. For example, it may not always be obvious if we are being approached by a blogger or journalist, in which case we should refer them to our engagement team.
- ✓ **Permanent:** remember once something is posted online it is very difficult to remove it.
- ✓ Care should be taken to **avoid sharing personal details** of both members of the public and ourselves via social media and other digital channels. Identity theft and personal security are real issues – one of the reasons why you are not permitted to state your link to the service on social media.
- ✓ Check security and privacy settings on your profiles.
- ✓ **Never disclose commercially sensitive, private or confidential information.**
- ✓ Do not upload, post or forward any **content belonging to a third party** unless you have that third party's consent.
- ✓ **Don't escalate heated discussions**, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry or upset; return to it later when you can contribute in a polite, calm and rational manner.
- ✓ **Always consider others' privacy** and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion.
- ✓ **Avoid publishing your contact details** where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them, and never publish anyone else's contact details.
- ✓ Before your first contribution on any social media site, **observe the activity on the site** for a while before launching in yourself to get a feel for the style of contributions, the nature of the content and any 'unwritten' rules that other contributors might follow.
- ✓ If you notice **any content posted on social media about us** (whether complimentary or critical) please report it to your line manager or the Engagement team.

Further Information

- Policy on a page
- People Impact Assessment

| Document Audit Information | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Senior Officer Accountable | Dominika Kimber |
| Authorised by | Karen Irvine |
| Direct enquiries to | Dominika Kimber |
| Date Implemented | April 2022 |
| Review by | April 2025 |
| Amendments required to | None |
| Related documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary Policy • Code of Ethical Conduct • Bullying and Harassment Policy |
| Replaced documents | None |
| Security classification | None |
| Version No | 5.0 |
| Version change summary | <p>3.0 General review and update of the policy triggered by the scheduled review date</p> <p>4.0 To bring in line with the Everyone Together campaign</p> <p>5.0 To explain how the policy applies to homeworking/hybrid work</p> |

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Corporate Policy



Legal support policy

| | | | |
|--------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Author | Chris Else | Job title | Assistant Director Resilience |
|--------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------|

Introduction

We know from history that Kent and Medway Fire Authority (KMFRA) colleagues may find themselves in positions where their actions at work result in harm to an individual including death and injury, or loss/damage to property. These actions may lead to Police and internal investigations, court cases and possibly convictions. In addition the actions may be looked at as part of a public inquiry. This policy sets out how KMFRA will provide legal support to colleagues in this situation.

Although the policy looks at the support for colleagues, it is important to set out that the reputation of the service and the legal advice for each incident or event will be considered within the policy decisions detailed.

This policy is underpinned by supplementary guidance which details the process and is reviewed in line with this policy. This guidance will include:

1. Detail of examples of what would and what would not be covered by the policy;
2. Detail of any financial limits as dictated by insurance cover and funds available at the time;
3. Detail of how to apply for coverage under the policy;
4. Detail of how an application would be approved or rejected;
5. The right to review support and the employee's/volunteer's obligation to co-operate with that review and provide information when requested to do so;
6. Examples showing what circumstances financial support may be withdrawn;
7. Details of in what circumstances KMFRA would expect some or all of the financial support to be repaid;
8. Detail of what KMFRA needs to see in order to make a payment; and
9. Details of the timings of such stages where appropriate.

Scope

The policy applies to all colleagues in KMFRA including volunteers. It looks at legal and the financial support for legal support, it is not concerned with other financial support for the individuals involved such as pay and living support payments as these are included in the People Teams policies.

We do have access to defence legal support through motor insurance policies that we fund through annual insurance premiums, for relevant incidents we will use this insurance cover but the funding of legal support will be considered for each individual incident.

The policy for the Chief Executive and directors is slightly different due to the role they hold.

Colleagues' actions outside of work are not covered by this policy and no support will be available for incidents/events that take place outside of work. Events or incidents that affect a KMFRA workplace, system or people but are not instigated through work activity will be considered on their individual circumstances.

Service Policy

The Service will provide legal support to any colleagues whose actions whilst at work are thought to have caused harm to an individual or individuals or resulted in loss or damage to property.

Although colleagues must formally request legal assistance from the authority, the support will be provided on the view that all will be innocent until found guilty and will continue until one or more of the following issues are known:

1. No legal or financial support is needed and is never likely to be needed.
2. Any court has provided a decision of guilt.
3. Internal investigations conclude that serious misconduct or gross misconduct has occurred.
4. The cost is or is likely to be in excess of the level set by Corporate Management Board taking the Authority's available budgets and/or insurance cover into account.
5. If the reputation to the service is likely to be damaged to the point where customers and/or partners lose confidence in the Authority to carry out its statutory duties
6. There is legal advice or court decision that suggests the provision of this support is likely to result in a conflict of interest for the Authority.

The decision to stop legal and financial support will be proposed by the Assistant Director People or Head of people and agreed by the Chief Executive, in the absence of the Chief Executive, two Directors can make the decision. A rationale for this decision must be recorded.

If the Chief Executive or any of the Directors need legal support due to their actions, an urgent meeting of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee will make the decision to either continue or stop the legal and financial support based on the same points above. This Committee will be responsible for monitoring this as long as the support is in place. Minutes relating to this will be excluded from the public domain whilst the legal case continues.

Article 8 of the [Local Authorities \(indemnities for members and Officers\) order 2004](#) requires the repayment of sums expended by the authority or the insurer in cases where the employee has been convicted of a criminal offence. All colleagues requesting support must be made aware of this before the support is provided.

Welfare support

Regardless of any legal or financial support provided or stopped, all KMFRA colleagues will still have access to all resources available to them for their welfare and wellbeing until such point where they no longer need to support or are dismissed from the service.

Legal consequences

The policy conforms to the requirements of the following Acts:

[Human Rights Act 1998](#)

[Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

[Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)

[Health & Safety at Work Act 1974](#)

[Local Authorities \(indemnities for members and Officers\) order 2004](#)

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Document Audit Information | |
| Senior Officer Accountable | Assistant Director Resilience |
| Authorised by | CMB |
| Direct enquiries to | Assistant Director Resilience |
| Date Implemented | Submitted to KMFRA July 2022 |
| Review by | If approved July 2025 |
| Amendments required to | Nothing relevant |
| Related documents [if any] | Discipline policy Significant safety events procedure Managing significant incidents framework |
| Replaced documents | None |
| Security classification | None |
| Version No | 0.3 – draft to KMFRA |
| Version change summary | 0.1 - First draft for CMB review – final draft to legal for review before authority agreement. 0.2 - final draft to legal 0.3 – Guidance from legal received and included |

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People & Learning



Managing Safeguarding Allegations

| | | | |
|--------|---|--|--|
| Author | Rebecca Chittenden Chloe Julian Paul Neal | | Safeguarding Manager Customer Safety Lead Head of People |
|--------|---|--|--|

Introduction

Safeguarding is the process that organisations put in place to make sure that they protect the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults at risk that colleagues or volunteers meet.

Managing the allegations is done in line with the disciplinary policy through a fair investigation process.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance (section 14.120 – 14.132) established the requirement that all relevant Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) partners (employers, student bodies and voluntary organisations) must have policies and procedures in line with those of Safeguarding Adults Boards for responding to concerns against any person who works with adults, in either a paid or unpaid capacity, in positions of trust. This applies to all organisations commissioned to provide services by them, so they respond appropriately to allegations made.

There should be a clear distinction between:

- A concern/allegation about abuse or neglect by a professional, or volunteer – this should be managed via these procedures
- A concern about the quality of care or practice provided by the person in a position of trust, that do not meet the criteria for a safeguarding enquiry – this should be raised as a quality issue initially to management within the organisation and should be dealt with under the Customer Feedback Policy (when published).
- Or a complaint – which needs to be dealt with via KFRS' own complaints procedure. This should be dealt with under the [Customer Feedback Policy](#)

This policy is in two parts.

1. Managing allegations against colleagues/volunteers relating to children (under the age of 18)
2. Managing allegations against colleagues/volunteers relating to adults (18 years and over)

What is Managing Safeguarding Allegations?

1. An allegation is a complaint made against a colleague or volunteer, either by a customer, another colleague/volunteer, or another agency. In this case the colleague or volunteer has taken actions that are likely to cause harm to that individual.

2. Examples of concerns or allegations could relate to a person who works with children, young people or adults who has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed an adult or child
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, an adult or child
 - behaved towards an adult or child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to adults with care and support needs
 - their conduct has raised concern as to their suitability to act in a position of trust
3. This process provides assurance to members of the public and Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB) that as a Service we will:
 - respond to concerns raised and balance the rights of individuals to whom the concerns have been raised against
 - share information based on the principles of justification and proportionality
 - work closely with other relevant partners for example Children's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Adult Social Services if appropriate
 - consider any transferability of risk, e.g., behaviour in their personal life to their work life.

Why is this important?

4. It is important to have a managing Safeguarding allegations policy. An allegation against a colleague or volunteer will then trigger certain actions to be taken to ensure that this is looked into and the person who has made the allegation is safeguarded if appropriate to do so.

Support for the person of whom the allegation is against.

5. As well as the responsibility for the safety of our customers the authority also has a duty of care to our members, colleagues and volunteers. There is support available for anyone facing an allegation, details of which can be found contained within the [Disciplinary Policy](#). It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a colleague or volunteer is dealt with quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child, young person or adult and, at the same time, supports the person who is the subject of the concern.

Information

Raising an allegation

6. External allegations may be received via the KFRS website to feedback@kent.fire-uk.org. Internal allegations may be received via the HR@kent.fire-uk.org email address or via telephone to the People Team. As soon as it is recognised that the issue relates to safeguarding, the minimum information possible will be recorded and passed to either the Head of People, or Assistant Director of People & Learning.
7. Safeguarding allegations are NOT to be recorded as feedback within the Authority's feedback log.

Allegations involving children (under the age of 18)

8. The process for a safeguarding allegation made against a colleague or volunteer which involves children is set out in [Appendix 1](#).

9. On receipt of an allegation, the Head of People or Assistant Director of People & Learning in liaison with the Customer Safety Lead and Safeguarding Manager is responsible for passing the allegation to the LADO within one working day.
10. The LADO will advise the Head of People or Assistant Director of People & Learning if the allegation passes critical thresholds which means further action is necessary. They will have access to additional information which the Authority will not be sighted on.
11. If the advice from the LADO is that the allegation passes the necessary thresholds, then the Head of People or Assistant Director of People & Learning, in liaison with a DSO (Designated Safeguarding Officer) will refer the allegation to the relevant Children's Social Services department.
12. The LADO may request a strategy discussion with other relevant agencies. They may also involve police or social services at that stage. The Authority will not await the outcome of that discussion before taking actions detailed in this policy. This is to protect both the Authority and the member of staff.
13. The LADO will advise what information about the allegation can be released to the colleague or volunteer.

Allegations involving adults (18 years and over)

14. The process for a safeguarding allegation made against a colleague or volunteer which involves adults is set out in [Appendix 2](#).
15. Allegations against staff involving Adults will require a different response. **There is no LADO for Adults.** Therefore, as a partner agency of KMSAB, we are individually responsible for ensuring that information in relation to PiPoT (People in Position of Trust) concerns is shared and escalated outside of our organisation in circumstances where this is required. It should be proportionate and appropriate with decisions made on each individual case. Whilst concerns may be raised through safeguarding processes about PiPoT, it may become known through many routes, including complaints, regulatory inspections, audits and quality systems, staff grievances, 'whistleblowing', social media, disciplinary and performance procedures.
16. Where PiPoT concerns are raised about someone who works with adults with care and support needs, it will be necessary for partners to assess any potential risk to other adults who use their services and, if necessary, to take action to safeguard those adults.

Actions following an allegation

17. Any allegation made against a colleague, volunteer or Member of the Authority, whether because of their work or outside of it, shall be investigated by the People team. The Head of People or a People Business Partner will contact the Safeguarding Manager or Customer Safety Lead to ensure safeguarding is considered at the start of the allegations process. Where matters involve children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be consulted within 24 hours of the allegation and before any decision is taken or communicated on suspension or dismissal.
18. On receipt of an allegation, the Head of People or Assistant Director of People & Learning, in liaison with the Safeguarding Manager/Customer Safety Lead is responsible for passing the allegation to the relevant local authority (Adult Social Care when allegation is related to an adult or LADO when allegation is related to a child) where a concern is raised that abuse or neglect may be taking place.
19. If an allegation is made out of hours, the Duty Strategic Commander must notify the Assistant Director, People and Learning or Head of People - during working hours- of the allegation. The allegation will be recorded, alongside any subsequent action taken.

20. As soon as practical, the allegation will be logged and stored securely by the Assistant Director – People & Learning or Head of People. Access to this data is restricted.
21. If the allegation is related to a child, the LADO will advise on next steps as cited in [Allegations involving children](#) section of this policy.
22. The colleague or volunteer who is the subject of the allegation may be removed from normal duty pending investigation. This does not necessarily mean that they are suspended from work, and options include potentially being redeployed into another function, or barred from lone working. The colleague or volunteer is to be told of this as soon as practical, but are not to be given any details of the allegation. Suspension of this nature can only be actioned by the Head of People or Assistant Director of People & Learning, in consultation with the Chief Executive. The line manager of the colleague or volunteer will also be notified of the change of duties.
23. If the allegation concerns the Chief Executive, then the Assistant Director of People & Learning, or a member of Corporate Management Board will contact the Chair of the Authority to discuss the allegation, and request that they action suspension of the Chief Executive pending investigation.

Investigation process

24. KFRS will allow the relevant agencies to investigate the allegation and await outcome of a Section 42 investigation under the Care Act 2014 if regarding an adult, Section 47 investigation under the Children's Act 1989 if regarding a child, or a criminal investigation, before taking any action against the colleague or volunteer (unless advised otherwise by the investigating agencies). This includes any form of investigation under the Authority's Code of Conduct or Discipline Regulations. [Code of Ethical Conduct – Keeping KFRS a good place to work \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
 25. KFRS will release all relevant details requested, under relevant legislation.
 26. Once the investigation is completed by the relevant agencies, KFRS will be notified of the outcome. The outcome, categorised by KFRS, will be one of the following:
 - Substantiated
 - Unsubstantiated
 - Unfounded (being either malicious or false)
 27. If there was an outcome of substantiated or unsubstantiated then an investigation under the KFRS' discipline regulations will be undertaken.
 28. If the allegation does not pass the relevant thresholds in the opinion of the relevant local authority adult social care department or LADO, or the case has been closed by Police/Social Services, the allegation may still be considered under KFRS' discipline process. The Assistant Director of People & Learning or Head of People may still liaise with the relevant authority's Adult Social Care team or LADO as part of this investigation to utilise their skills and experience.
 29. In the event of an allegation related to an adult, the Assistant Director of People & Learning or Head of People, may notify the relevant authority's Adult Social Care team of the outcome of the discipline process regardless of the outcome.
 30. In the event of an allegation related to a child, the Assistant Director of People & Learning or Head of People will notify the LADO of the outcome of the discipline process regardless of the outcome.
1. It may also be necessary following discussions with the LADO to notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of the outcome from both investigations.

Records Management

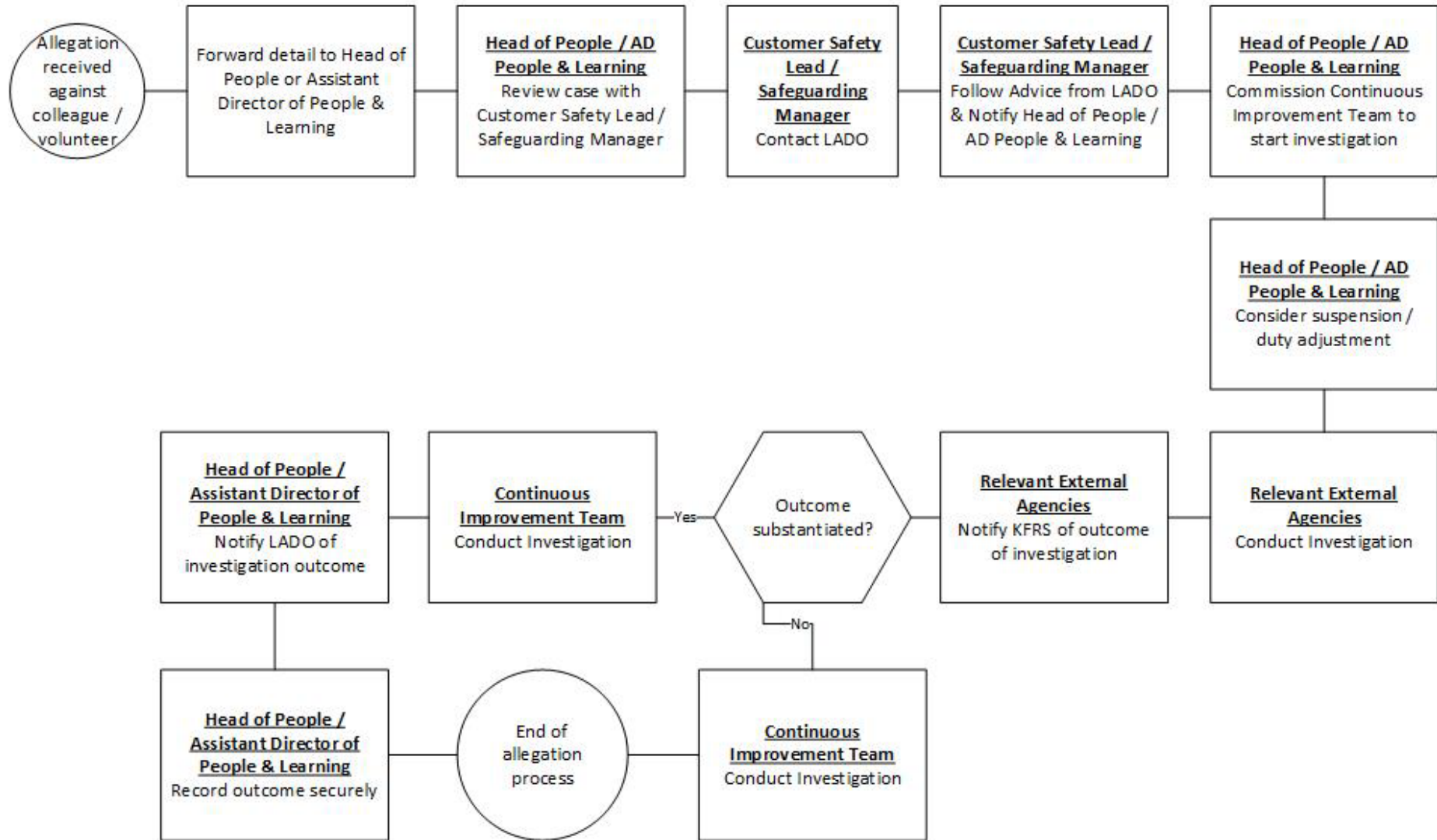
31. KFRS will maintain a record of all identified concerns, people consulted, decisions made and any recommendations given as part of the investigation. This information will be excluded from publication under the Freedom of Information Act. Records of any founded allegations made and the outcome of any investigation (irrespective of whether it results in no action or disciplinary action) will be kept in line with the standard retention period for personnel files.

| Document Audit Information | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Senior Officer Accountable | Paul Neal |
| Authorised by | |
| Direct enquiries to | Rebecca Chittenden / Paul Neal |
| Date Implemented | June 2022 |
| Review by | June 2027 |
| Amendments required to | Feedback and Allegations Policy |
| Related documents [if any] | <p>Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk) • Children Act 1989 (legislation.gov.uk) • Disciplinary Policy • Code of Ethical Conduct – Keeping KFRS a good place to work (sharepoint.com) • Safeguarding Policy https://kent4.sharepoint.com/Policy%20and%20performance/Policies%20(PDFs)/Safeguarding%20Policy.pdf?web=1 • Information Security Policy • Data Protection Policy <p>Guidance documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Concerns around People in Positions of Trust (PiPoT) – Kent Medway Safeguarding Adults Board. KMSAB People in Positions of Trust Policy |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• G28 - Terms and Definitions• Information sharing document for Safeguarding. |
| Replaced documents | Feedback and Allegations Policy |
| Security classification | |
| Version No | 1 |
| Version change summary | |

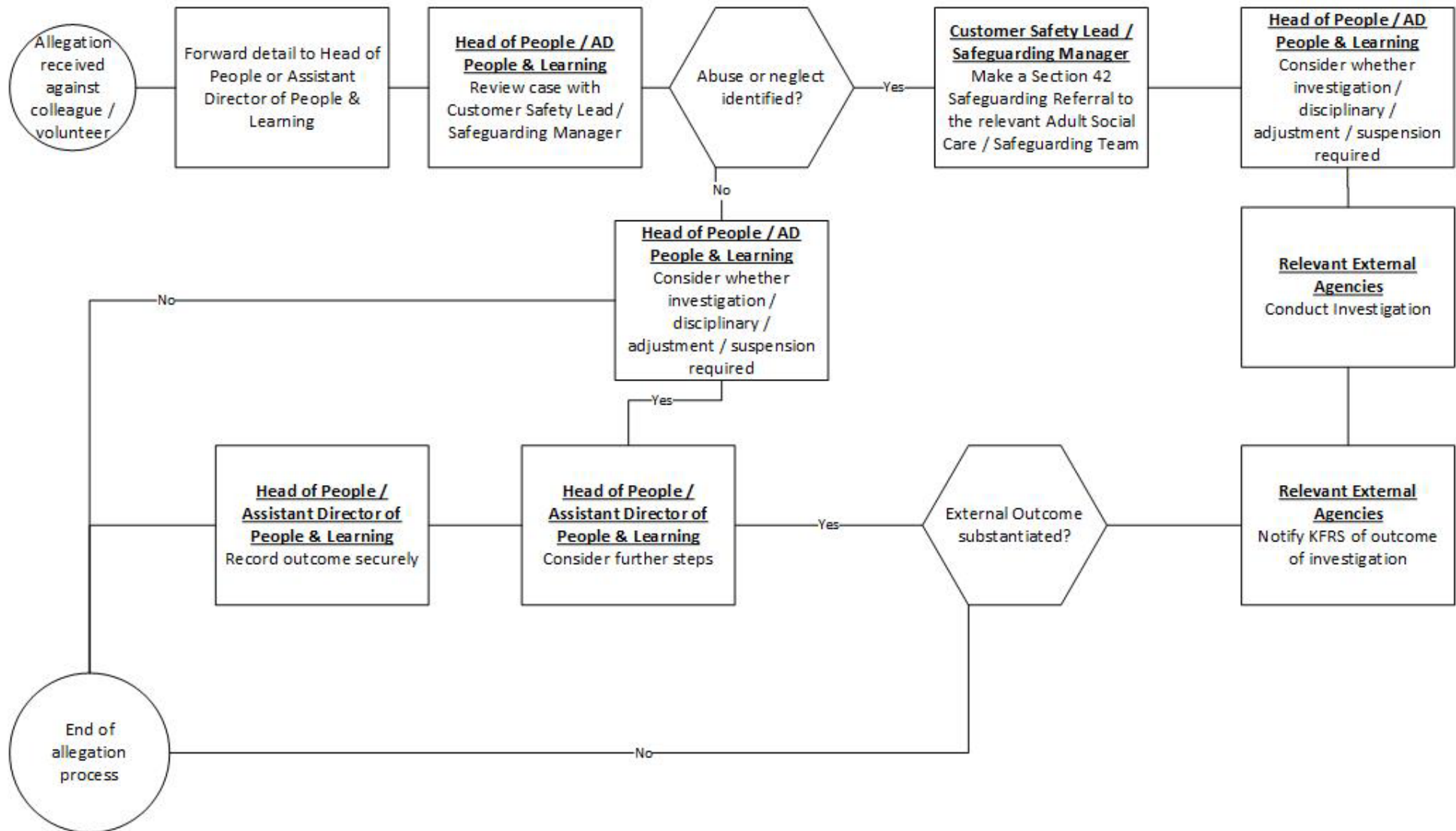
Appendix 1. The process for a safeguarding allegation made against a colleague or volunteer and involving children.

Appendix 1 – Allegation made against a colleague or volunteer involving children



Appendix 2. The process for a safeguarding allegation made against a member of staff and involving adults.

Appendix 2 – Allegation made against a colleague or volunteer involving adults



Corporate Services



Environment Policy

| | | | |
|---------|--------------|--|------------------|
| Authors | Kevin Galvin | | Head of Property |
|---------|--------------|--|------------------|

Introduction

At Kent Fire and Rescue Service we recognise that we can affect the environment through: the services we provide and how we deliver them, our policies, our enforcement of laws and regulations and the choices we make when buying goods or commissioning services.

We acknowledge our role and responsibility for the protection and enhancement of the environment and have implemented a Climate Action Plan to maximise energy efficiency, to reduce and prevent pollution reduce the impact on the environment from our operations and to deliver environmental improvements through partnership and collaborative working.

This policy statement seeks to set out the environmental aims of Kent Fire and Rescue Service and its commitment to continuous improvement.

In conjunction with other local authorities across Kent and Medway, in 2020 KFRS declared a climate emergency and is working towards becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030.

Scope

This Policy applies to all colleagues, volunteers and Members of the Authority.

Service Policy

Kent Fire and Rescue Service is committed to:

- Assess the environmental impacts of our operations and set objectives and targets in order to improve our environmental performance.
- Comply with all relevant environmental legislations;
- Promote the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and eco-system resilience;
- Promote responsibility for the environment within the organisation and communicate and reduce carbon emissions from fleet vehicles,
- Minimise energy and water demand across our estate and use all resources efficiently;
- Minimise waste by reduction, re-use and recycling methods or composting and energy recovery to minimise the amount sent to landfill;
- Through our procurement processes and Social Value Policy;, ensuring that goods and services we buy meet our environmental requirements
- Working with our contractors and suppliers to help them improve their environmental performance;
- Contributing to the creation of a sustainable built environment through the planning process and achieving a high level of sustainability in our own development projects;
- Using products, materials and goods that, wherever possible, have a minimal environmental impact in the extraction or sourcing of materials, manufacture, transport, use and disposal;
- Promoting a culture of environmental awareness including through the provision of training and ensuring that teams are aware of their role in implementing this policy;

- Keeping our teams updated on progress and encouraging them to develop new ideas and initiatives through our Green Forum;
- Ensuring that our policies and services are developed in a way that is complimentary to this policy.

This Environment Policy Statement is available to all colleagues through intranet systems, and is available to interested parties via the Kent Fire and Rescue Service's website.

Legal consequences

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Document Audit Information | |
| Senior Officer Accountable | Kevin Galvin |
| Authorised by | Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority |
| Direct enquiries to | Kevin Galvin |
| Date Implemented | 5 July 2022 |
| Review by | 5 July 2027 |
| Amendments required to | None |
| Related documents [if any] | None |
| Replaced documents | None |
| Security classification | Unrestricted |
| Version No | 1 |
| Version change summary | New Policy |

By: Chief Executive
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2022
Subject: INFORMATION UPDATE
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR INFORMATION

SUMMARY

This information update covers the following topics:

- A. Inspection Update (paragraphs 1 to 3 and **Appendix 1** refer);
- B. Performance Outturn and Update (paragraphs 4 to 15 refer and **Appendix 2** refer);
- C. Response and Resilience Update (paragraphs 16 to 28 refer);
- D. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update (paragraphs 29 to 50 refer);
- E. Freedom of Information update (paragraphs 51 to 57 refer);
- F. Customer Feedback update (paragraphs 58 to 64 refer);
- G. Pensions and Pensions Board Update (paragraph 65 and **Appendix 3** refer).

CONCLUSION

Members are requested to:

1. Consider and note the contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: See each section

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL:

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

COMMENTS

Background

A. Inspection and National Issues Update

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

1. At the time of this meeting, officers will be beginning on-site engagement for the Authority's second inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services. The strategic briefing was held on 24 June, and the Chair of the Authority has also been interviewed. A verbal update can be provided at the meeting.
2. The resulting report is unlikely to be available until near to the end of the year and will be reported to a future meeting.
3. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services issued a consultation on round three of the inspection process. The proposals for round three are broadly very similar to the previous two rounds. The closing date was 6 June 2022, and therefore a response was agreed as urgent business with the Chair of the Authority. It is attached for Members' information at **Appendix 1**.

B. Performance Outturn and Update

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

Summary of Performance

4. This update provides Members with an overview of the Authority's performance between April and May 2022/23 as well as performance against the three-year average targets for the period 2021-24. Caution should be taken with any projections referenced in this update as we are only two months into the financial year.
5. So far this year 6,726 emergency calls were received in the Authority's control room which is higher than levels seen in the previous year. The Authority has attended 944 fires so far this year which is also higher than the same period the previous year. The three-year average projection for the 2021-24 period is 3,576 which is lower than the target of 4,210.
6. Accidental fires accounted for 55% of the total fires attended so far this financial year and, as a result of these fires, eight people have suffered fire related injuries. There has also been one serious injury and eight slight injuries reported as a result of deliberate fires this year.
7. In recent years the Authority has reported the lowest ever number of accidental fires in the home. So far this year 92 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 515 which is 3.2% lower than the target of 532.

8. The Authority has attended 180 road traffic collisions so far this financial year which is considerably higher than the same period in the previous two years (56 and 131), however previous year's performance is affected by the pandemic and lockdowns. Levels of activity are now comparable with the 2019-2020 period As a result of these incidents two people have died and 21 have been seriously injured.
9. So far this year 67.54% of life-threatening incidents were reached within 10 minutes and 79.38% within 12 minutes. Overall performance is lower than the targets set for these indicators. Performance on response times was lower in April than would be anticipated but have returned to over 70% in May. During April a higher proportion of life threatening incidents were in on-call areas which we would not expect that response times could be reached routinely. The data available also highlights that a greater proportion of incidents not reached in 10 minutes are over the lunchtime period. Further investigations are ongoing to identify the causes of these, however the data should be treated with caution due to the small numbers involved.
10. The Authority attended life-threatening fire incidents within 10 minutes on 73.99% occasions whilst life-threatening road traffic collisions were reached within 10 minutes on 54.05% of occasions. Non-life threatening incidents were attended within 15 minutes on 91.18% of occasions.
11. The Authority's Customer Safety teams have delivered 1,825 Safe and Well Visits to customers across Kent and Medway so far this year. In addition to these visits, 1,031 Home Safety Visits have been carried out by on duty crews and the Home Safety Visit Taskforce.
12. All building consultations received (296) have been completed within 21 days on 99% of occasions so far this year. Business Safety teams have also carried out 260 audits of business premises so far this year in line with the Authority's risk based inspection programme.
13. The Authority aims to have a minimum of 32 with an aspiration of 44 fire engines available day and night across Kent and Medway as detailed in the recently agreed Safety and Wellbeing plan. The number of fire engines available is heavily influenced by the availability of on-call firefighters and can therefore fluctuate over a 24 hour period. So far this year the average number of fire engines available has been 33 during the day (9am-6pm) and 48 in the evening (6pm to 9am). Of the 33 available during the day, 26 of these are full-time fire engines and the remainder on-call.
14. So far this year, 4.86% of all contracted hours have been lost due to sickness. Operational staff have lost 5.28% of contracted hours to sickness and Corporate teams staff have lost 3.71%.
15. **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995:** RIDDOR-reportable injuries are those that the Authority is required to report to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous

Occurrences Regulations 1995. So far this year three RIDDOR-reportable injuries have been recorded.

C. Response and Resilience Update

Lead/Contact Officer: Mark Rist - Director, Operations
01622 692121 ext 8231, mark.rist@kent.fire-uk.org

Recent Incidents of Interest

16. There have been a number of significant recent incidents which are brought to Members' attention in the period February to June 2022.
17. **House fire, Deal – initial call 23.35 hrs 02/02/2022:** Firefighters were called to a report of a fire in a conservatory at the rear of a domestic property. Upon arrival, firefighters met the occupier who was suffering from smoke inhalation and minor flash burns, and was attended to by SECamb. Firefighters prevented the fire from spreading to the main house, minimising fire and smoke damage and containing it largely to the ground floor. The Fire Investigation Team attended the following day and concluded the origin of the fire to be in the lean-to area adjacent to the conservatory. Evidence was found of a battery charger connected to a battery and the cause was determined to be a fault in the battery charger, which was located in the area of the lean-to structure close to wooden shelving units. The rapid fire spread was believed to be due camping gas cylinders and petrol powered tools being in proximity to the seat of the fire. Firefighters also returned the following day to check that no hot spots had reignited. In terms of damage, approximately 30% of the ground floor was damaged by fire and the entire ground floor was smoke damaged.
18. **Spate Conditions – Storm Initial call 13.28 hrs 17/02/2022:** Storm Eunice was a period of severe weather, occurring over a number of days in February 2022. High winds brought down trees, power lines and structures, as well as damaging properties and disrupting the road and rail network throughout the county. On Wednesday 16 February yellow weather warnings increased and emergency resource planning began looking at fire engine and officer availability, identifying where numbers could be increased to provide additional cover. Proactive decisions were made regarding the Isle of Sheppey due to the potential for the closure of the Sheppey Crossing, and additional fire engines were made available. In addition, elements of the Authority's Strategic Level Reserve were stood up.
19. As a result of Storm Eunice a Tier 2 Critical / Business Continuity Incident was declared on Thursday 17 February, following a severe weather warning (yellow) which then moved to a Tier 3 at 13.05 hrs on 18 February. Over the period from 09.00 hrs on Friday 18 until 19.00 hrs on Monday 21, a total of 866 emergency calls were received, with 326 of these being weather related. Friday (18 February) was the day when the most calls were received, with a total of 449 calls, of which 216 were weather related. These reduced to 171 (40 weather related), 132 (35 weather related), and 114 (35 weather related) over the following days. Whilst the main day of the severe weather was Friday 18 February, this continued over the weekend into Monday 21 February,

albeit with these days experiencing less severe weather, with a lower number of calls received and incidents attended.

20. **Fire in an industrial estate, Lordswood – Initial call 13.05 hrs 11/03/2022:** This was a fire on an industrial estate at a factory for a company that manufactures printing plates. A probationary worker sharpened a tool in an area that was exclusively used for machining magnesium. The ensuing sparks ignited magnesium dust which then caused a rapidly developing and intense fire that spread to a number of the other industrial units at the site. At the height of the incident a total of 12 fire engines and 9 specialist vehicles were in attendance. Among the specialist vehicles that were deployed and utilised to great effect were the drone, an aerial ladder platform and one of the Authority's telehandlers. A telehandler is a versatile four-wheeled machine with a boom that can extend forwards and upwards from the vehicle. This can be used to lift and move items by employing various attachments which fit on to the end of the boom, such as forks, a bucket or even a person cage.
21. **Restaurant fire, Broadstairs – initial call 10.00 hrs 24/03/2022:** Firefighters attended a fire at a Chinese restaurant caused by a wok filled with cooking oil being left unattended and igniting. The resulting fire spread into the extraction system, then to the flat roof of the restaurant kitchen, from where it then moved along an external weatherproofing structure, to a pitched tiled roof and then to a first floor residential flat. In terms of damage, 20% of the kitchen roof was destroyed; the weatherproofing structure was completely destroyed; 10% of the exterior residential flat was damaged by fire; and there was smoke damage to 30% of the internal area of the flat. Due to concerns about the restaurant's fire safety precautions, members of the Authority's Building Safety Team attended to investigate potential contraventions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In addition the local authority opened an investigation into potential planning and building regulation infringements.
22. **Fire in caravan park clubhouse – initial call 00.54 hrs 25/03/2022:** This was a fire in the first floor of a two storey building. This clubhouse is a large building with multiple additions to the original property. It houses public areas (club, bar, restaurant and kitchens) on the ground floor with office space above. At the height of the incident a total of eight fire engines and nine special vehicles (including the Authority's drone) were in attendance. When firefighters arrived, smoke was issuing from the roof and upper windows and a vented fire was evident at the rear. Fire was prevented from wholly affecting the apex roof of the main building through effective intervention by the firefighters. The fire investigation concluded that the origin of the fire was in a store room with high fire loading. All accidental causes were discounted as the investigation progressed. CCTV hard drives were retrieved from the property and, although damaged, footage was able to be retrieved by the security management company which indicates that the fire was deliberately set. The outcomes of this investigation have been reported to Kent Police as a deliberate fire and this incident is under police investigation.

23. **Domestic property fire, Sittingbourne – initial call 23.28 hrs 19/04/2022:** Firefighters attended a fire in a substantial, grade two listed, period farmhouse. Upon arrival, crews were faced with a well-developed fire in the roof of the property. Due to the size of the property (approximately 30 by 15 metres/100 foot by 50 foot) and the fact that it was initially believed to be thatched, the incident was escalated to nine fire engines (it transpired that it was in fact the garage attached to the dwelling that had a thatched roof). Firefighters worked hard to prevent further fire spread by skilfully employing effective firefighting tactics (offensive firefighting by crews wearing breathing apparatus, use of a height vehicle, fog spikes and comprehensive salvage intervention). Following a scene examination by the Fire Investigation Team, the cause was determined to be the accidental ignition of bird nesting material that had accumulated above halogen downlighters in an en suite bathroom located on the first floor.
24. **Fire in stables, Aldington – initial call 03.54 hrs 21/04/2022:** Initially firefighters arrived to face a developed fire in an 'L-shaped' stable block. The nature of the building meant that the uninterrupted roof space had the potential for rapid spread to the entire building. The swift action by crews to create a fire break including the use of fog spike, limited the loss to fire damage. Initially believed to be a deliberate fire, KFRS supported Kent Police in the investigation. However, following a fire scene examination, the cause was determined to be spontaneous ignition of laundered tea towels inside a tumble dryer.
25. **Wall collapsing, Lewis Castle, East Sussex – initial call 12.40 hrs 13/05/2022:** The Authority's Technical rescue team and an officer was requested by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to provide technical help for a part of the wall of Lewis Castle that was threatening to collapse. The wall was in excess of twenty metres tall and located three meters away from a row of historic terraced homes. Following a recent period of dry weather the old flint wall from the castle was bulging mid-way with spalling flint falling onto the adjacent houses. The Authority's Technical Rescue Team used the drone to help survey the wall and provide real-time imagery to the local authority inspectors, along with technical information on possible outcomes of a collapse. Firefighters worked closely with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and local authority engineers to advise on shoring and safe working practices in risk areas.
26. **Road traffic collision – Fatality / Entrapment – Initial time of call 13:24 on 20/05/2022:** Five fire appliances and three officers attended a complex road traffic accident on Yelsted Rd, Sittingbourne. There was unfortunately a driver who was declared deceased, but a child who was trapped by their hand in the structure of the car was rescued. The car had travelled some distance down an embankment which was thick with undergrowth and had come to rest against a tree. The car was on its side, which created a difficult and complex working environment for the responding crews, having to work around a fatality in situ to release the child. Firefighters returned to the scene later in the day to assist with scene investigation and the recovery of the deceased adult.

27. **Commercial fire, Gravesend – initial call 13.04 hrs 26/05/2022:** This was a large fire in a disused commercial premises (vape shop and grade II listed pub) which spread to the roof space and common roof voids, affecting three of the adjoining properties. The extent of fire caused the building to collapse, leading to road closures in the immediate area. The Authority worked in partnership with Gravesham Borough Council to implement business continuity plans to assist local businesses. Fire crews and the Authority's Technical Rescue Team exposed areas of roof in the adjacent properties to check fire spread and assisted customers with identifying and recovering personal items. The nature of the incident in the high street generated a great deal of public interest and required significant resources. Whilst the property was no longer in use as a commercial premises, evidence was found to suggest that the premises was being used to cultivate cannabis. In connection with this, abstraction of electricity was taking place and the fire was believed to have started due to an electrical fault.
28. **Flat fire, Margate – initial call 18.31 hrs 27/05/2022:** Fire crews arrived to find thick black smoke and flames issuing from the balcony and side window of the upper floor of a two-storey block of flats. Police were already in attendance and it was reported that an adult male was in the property. This individual was suspected of setting the property alight using oil or fuel, dousing himself in oil and threatening to kill himself through self-immolation. Crews entered the property, located the unconscious male and took him to the first floor balcony where he was given oxygen therapy after which he regained consciousness. The Authority's Fire Investigation Team carried out a joint fire scene examination with crime scene investigators from Kent Police. The fire was determined to have been deliberately set with cooking oil used to spread the fire.

D. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update

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

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

Building Safety Update

30. The Fire Safety Act 2021 (the Act) received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021 and commenced on 16 May 2022. The Act amends the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Fire Safety Order). Building Safety continues to review processes and resources to effectively deliver services to our customers in line with the changing legislation.
31. The Fire Engineering team is now aligned to a central hub of fire engineers and a team of fire design technicians. The central hub tackles more complex consultations with the technicians working out in district offices to share knowledge and understanding with the fire inspectors. This change will develop the team further and aligns to the national competency framework.

32. The Risk Information team is now fully embedded following their move from Response to Building Safety in November 2021. They are demonstrating the benefits of a shared understanding of risk across Building Safety, Customer Safety, Response and Resilience. All site specific risk information is now accessible to all colleagues through Dynamics, companion devices and SharePoint, providing quick and easy access to critical information for all.
33. Stations are now undertaking Response Assessment Visits Intelligence (RAV-Int), allowing operational firefighters to feedback risk critical information on building safety concerns, hazards to firefighters, and safeguarding and customer support. This work is both intelligence led through the Risk Based Inspection Programme and dynamic in responding to attendance at incidents and automatic fire alarms. This initiative has already led to significant safety concerns being raised and addressed, including recent enforcement activity in Gillingham following a RAV-Int visit by firefighters.

Engagement Update

34. **Campaigns:** We are developing a public communications campaign to encourage customers to keep their hob clear to prevent kitchen fires – the focus will primarily be on keeping tea towels away from the hob. The Engagement team and Behaviour Change team are working together and will begin user-testing shortly to discover which concepts resonate most with customers within the target audience (adults aged 30-45). The campaign is expected to launch before Christmas.
35. **Social media:** The Authority has launched a TikTok profile to reach younger audiences with targeted digital content. In just over two and half months, there have been more than 80,500 likes across the videos we've published on the platform. The most popular content so far have been specifically about home safety – the most successful being a video about phone charger safety, which has been watched nearly 1 million times and has created active discussion about charger safety with over 1k people involved in those conversations. The number of followers has increased to more than 9,000 – and is growing every day.
36. **Events:** The first set of Fire Station 'Spring Open Day' events, held during school half-term, were 'sold out'. The Authority will be delivering larger scale Summer Open Day events throughout July and August across six fire stations. Working with the Behaviour Change and Education teams the events have been further developed to incorporate behaviour change messaging to help deliver a better understanding of fire safety for the customer
37. **Recruitment marketing:** The Authority is developing recruitment pages on our website to support enhanced recruitment of roles across the Service. Our 'working for KFRS' pages will give people more insight into all the Service's teams, the people who work and volunteer for us, benefits and the culture of the organisation. This will play an important role in helping to appeal to a targeted market place of people looking for new job opportunities. The pages have been developed to include more visual and video content, blog posts and employee experiences.

38. **Volunteers:** Six new volunteers have recently joined the Service and will soon be attending incidents and supporting events. The volunteers scheme currently has 46 volunteers, which brings skills, time and experience to our organisation which can be of great benefit to both Kent Fire and Rescue Service and to our customers.
39. The Authority recently secured the 'Investing In Volunteers' Award, which recognises organisations commitment to ensuring volunteers have the best possible experience. The award was presented to KFRS to mark Volunteers Week 2022.

Customer Experience and Behaviour Change

40. Providing an excellent experience for all its customers continues to be a priority for the Authority. This innovative approach to embedding a customer-centric culture and tailoring services was recognised recently with a Bronze Award at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards. The Authority was also shortlisted as a finalist in the UK Customer Satisfaction Awards in the Quality Service Provider category.
41. The Customer Experience team is working with the behaviour change researchers on a pioneering project to really get to know the people the Authority serves. The first phase of a large-scale customer insight project is well underway. This is the first time a fire and rescue service has undertaken such an initiative to truly understand peoples' needs, behaviours and motivations. This is important as the Authority recognises that everyone is unique, and individuals think, feel and act differently. The information gained will be used to tailor services to provide the best possible customer service as well as developing campaigns and interventions to help keep people safe.
42. The team are also embarking on a new programme to transform internal customer experience, for example corporate services provided to operational stations. This is important as it is known that a customer focused approach not only supports better outcomes but can also improve efficiency and effectiveness. The programme is at an early stage and iESE has been commissioned to help identify priorities. The programme is expected to run for the next few years.
43. **Business Safety:** A survey has been developed and is being pilot tested to assess where and how business owners and/or their responsible persons currently seek out fire safety advice in order to maintain compliance for their premises. The aim of this work is to better understand where gaps in knowledge and understanding are so that we can communicate more effectively with those business owners who need to carry out work in order to become compliant in maintaining fire safety standards.

Collaboration Update

44. **Tackling Deliberate Fires:** Medway Task Force, KFRS, Kent Police and Medway Council worked together to combat a spate of deliberate fires being experienced in the Medway area. A number of combined activities contributed to a considerable reduction in fires. In total 10 individuals have received safeguarding support or offered firesetter

intervention. A majority of those have stopped fire setting and with partners we continue to work with others to reduce the number of fires.

45. **Support for Ukraine:** The Collaboration team helped, along with many colleagues across the Service, to support the national effort to provide fire engines and equipment to Ukraine. Three convoys left Ashford fire station with key firefighting tools to provide vital life-saving equipment to firefighters in Ukraine. More than 60 fire vehicles – packed with hoses, helmets, thermal imaging cameras, generators, ladders, rescue equipment and protective equipment and other kit requested by Ukraine – have now been donated by UK fire and rescue services and the wider fire sector.
46. **Homes for Ukraine:** The Authority is supporting partners by delivering home fire safety visits to households hosting families from Ukraine. In addition, the Authority is supporting a mutual aid request from Kent County Council in carrying out post arrival visits, which includes checking on the welfare of those families after their arrival from Ukraine.
47. **Asian Fire Service Association:** The Authority hosted this years' Asian Fire Service Association conference, which took place on 23 and 24 June 2022. The event highlighted issues around equality, diversity and inclusion. A further verbal update can be given at the meeting.

Customer Safety Update

48. **Safe and Well:** An additional team has been created to carry out Home Fire Safety visits, which consists 10 additional officers – known as the Home Fire Safety Taskforce. While providing operational resilience where required, the function of the HFSV Taskforce is to provide safety advice and install smoke alarms in customer's homes.
49. **Safeguarding:** From January to April, KFRS raised and actioned 194 safeguarding cases. The new level three and four safeguarding training package has been developed by KFRS and delivered to senior management and designated safeguarding officers. A Level one and two safeguarding eLearning package has also been devised which requires mandatory completion by all employees and volunteers. Both packages are being adopted by the NFCC with a view to rolling out the Kent designed training programme nationally.
50. **Education:** The Education team has delivered safety sessions to 140 schools across Kent and Medway, which equates to 46,647 students of both primary and secondary age. The Education team have also supported 'Safety in Action' events sharing advice with 4,066 Year six students. In addition, 24 fire safety talks have been delivered to customer groups, a number of which resulting in an onward referral.

E. Freedom of Information Update

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

51. 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.
52. A total of 30 Freedom of Information requests have so far been received in 2022/23 (up to and including 01/06/2022). For comparison, for the same period in 2021/22 the Authority received 34 Freedom of Information requests (out of a total of 188 for that year). All Freedom of Information requests responded to so far in 2022/23 have been dealt with within the statutory limit of 20 working days (starting with the first working day after the request was received).
53. Two Subject Access Requests have so far been received in 2022/23 (up to and including 01/06/2022). All Subject Access Requests received in 2022/23 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).
54. **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.
55. 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).
56. 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
57. 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 2022/23

| | 2022/23 | | | |
|--|---------|----|----|----|
| | Q1* | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| The number of requests received during the period | 30 | | | |
| The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed | 6 | | | |
| The number of the received requests that were processed in full | 24 | | | |
| The number of requests where the information was granted in full | 21 | | | |
| The number of requests where the information was refused in full | 0 | | | |
| The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part | 3 | | | |
| The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review | 0 | | | |
| Number of subject access requests** | 2 | | | |

* Q1 is currently incomplete as it covers the period from 01/04/2022 to 01/06/2022

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

F. Customer Feedback Update

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

58. Members will recall that the Customer Feedback Policy was recently revised to reflect recommendations from internal auditors and the Institute of Customer Service. The processes to support the new policy, including more consistent recording of feedback across all teams has been implemented. This new process may increase the volume of feedback reported in the future.

Compliments received in 2021/22

59. The number of compliments received by the Authority is shown in **Table 2**. The number of compliments received has increased over recent years as customers are more actively encouraged to provide feedback. It is important to note that the Authority continues to receive far more compliments than complaints (96 versus 24 respectively). In addition to these formally recorded compliments the Authority receives many compliments via social media, in 2021/22, for example, 184 compliments were identified in our most commonly used social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). Compliments received as part of feedback gathered through surveys, for example after a home fire safety visit, are not included within these figures (see below).
60. Operational incidents continue to make up a large proportion of compliments but, this year especially, customer safety, events and campaigns, including the response to the pandemic, have also attracted a lot of compliments. Likewise, proactive engagement through home fire safety visits generated some positive feedback. It is also pleasing to note the comments about operational crews going above and beyond to meet customers' needs.

Table 2: Number of formal compliments received

| Year | Compliments Received |
|---------|----------------------|
| 2021/22 | 96 |
| 2020/21 | 89 |
| 2019/20 | 109 |

Complaints received in 2021/22

61. The number of complaints received continues to remain very low for an Authority of this size. This is encouraging when considering the level of organisational change experienced over the past few years. As with previous years, the most frequent reasons for a founded complaint continues to be driving.
62. The process for complaining has been amended as part of the new Customer Feedback Policy. Whilst all complainants are still encouraged to submit complaints in writing this is no longer a requirement to ensure the process is fully accessible to everyone. All complainants are made aware of the appeals process but there were no appeals received during 2021/22.

Table 3: Complaints made to the Authority

| Year | Founded/partially founded | Unfounded | Totals |
|---------|---------------------------|-----------|--------|
| 2021/22 | 11 | 13 | 24* |
| 2020/21 | 14 | 19 | 35 |
| 2019/20 | 22 | 25 | 47 |

*in 2021/22 a further six complaints were withdrawn. In 2020/21 one complaint was withdrawn and in 2019/20 eight complaints were withdrawn. Withdrawn complaints are not counted in the totals above.

Other customer feedback

63. In line with the Customer Feedback Policy, any clear expressions of dissatisfaction with a service received from the Authority are dealt with as complaints and included in the totals above. When customers are actively asked to provide feedback the vast majority are very complimentary and therefore comments received through this route are not treated as formal compliments reported above.
64. During 2021/22 customers receiving a Safe and Well or Home Fire Safety Visit were asked for feedback on the service they received. The information received is discussed regularly with team leaders and used to support continuous improvement. A summary of the main findings is included in **Table 4** below which show an incredibly high level of satisfaction and perceived value in the service provided. A similar process will be introduced for other services provided by the Authority, for example Building Safety and Response

Table 4: Overall, how happy are you with the service you received?

| | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Other |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Overall satisfaction | 925 (93%) | 56 (6%) | 11 (1%) |

Table 5: Do you feel safer as a result of the home visit?

| | Yes | No or unsure |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|
| Feeling safer | 966 (97%) | 29 (3%) |

Table 6: How likely is it that you would recommend Kent Fire and Rescue Service to a friend or colleague? (Net Promoter Score¹)

| | Detractors | Passives | Promoters | NPS score |
|-----|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| NPS | 13 | 24 | 953 | 95 |

G. 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*

65. Members will recall that, in accordance with the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the Authority established a Pension Board in relation to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes comprising representatives of both the employer and employees. To ensure that Members are kept informed of the issues discussed and can be reassured that the Authority is complying with its duties under the Act, Minutes of the Pension Board meetings are routinely reported to the Authority. Accordingly, the Minutes of the last meeting of the Authority's Pension Board are attached at **Appendix 3** for Members' information.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

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

CONCLUSION

67. Members are requested to:

67.1 Consider and note the contents of the report.

Service Headquarters
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**Kent Fire &
Rescue Service**

together

To
Chief Operating Officer
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue
Services (HMICFRS)
8th Floor
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BJ

Contact
James Finch
Direct line
01622 692 121 ext 7955
Email
james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org

Our ref

Your ref

Date
25 May 2022

Sent by email to HMICFRSinspectionsadmin@hmicfrs.gov.uk

Dear Roy,

Proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework 2023/24

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework 2023/24. We have shared this response with the Chair of the Authority and this response reflects the collective opinion of both Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority.

We welcome inspection when delivered to a timetable which allows fire and rescue services to deliver change within timeframes that allow appropriate decision-making and engagement with colleagues. We welcome confirmation if we are performing well, or if there are areas we need to do better at, although inspection is not our only source of assurance on this issue.

Our comments are framed around our experience of the round one inspection and the preparation for round two. We have not yet had our on-site visits for round two.

1. Is focusing on service improvement the most important area for our third round of inspections?

Yes. But it appears the proposals for round three are very similar and will again use capacity within fire and rescue services that could be focused on improving services. The HMICFRS needs to be aware that inspection causes an additional burden on fire and rescue services and cannot be described as "light touch".

2. Are there any other aspects of effectiveness that we should focus on?

We note the reliance on the work of the fire standards board to set a benchmark for effectiveness across business areas. There are many professional bodies who are offering evidence of emerging best practice that we would like to see reflected. The example presented previously to HMICFRS of the use of traditional appraisal for instance which is now seen as



outdated and unhelpful. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the lead body for issues affecting the workforce, has highlighted the need to move to continuous dialogue. In these areas of organisational development we need to allow for different approaches.

3. Are there any other aspects of efficiency or productivity that we should focus on?

We welcome a broader approach to efficiency being about quality of services as well as the generation of savings. We would welcome more credit for those services involved in driving the national sector's agenda around improving approaches to procurement, which we feel was overlooked in Round 1. [We have not been inspected for round two yet, but will raise this point as part of that process]. We would encourage the HMICFRS to review value for money statements being produced by external auditors and place reliance on that work rather than duplicating in this field.

4. Should we inspect the steps FRSs are taking to address climate change? This would mean spending less time on other questions.

We welcome a focus on climate change and climate action plans. We would ask that assessments made there take account of where the market currently is for fire appliances, as more than 50% of our emissions are from our diesel heavy fleet. There is limited chance to impact significantly on this until the market can provide a viable and affordable alternative.

5. If so, what should we spend less time on?

We have learnt many operational lessons as a fire sector from Grenfell, including improving fire survival guidance and stairwell protection. Safety for residents living within high-rise residential buildings has extensively improved across the country due to fire safety inspection regimes including the building risk review though we stay focused on the belief that there is much still to do.

We are conscious however, of other significant risks which may need attention before we see further tragic events, including the outcomes for the sector from the Kerslake review into the Manchester Arena attacks. We also believe there should be more focus on to care homes and sheltered accommodation. They are far more numerous, come with added complexities due to the age of the residents and pose the real possibility of multiple deaths in the event of a fire. The combined impact of Brexit and Covid has seen churn of staffing in care homes, and we are concerned.

In relation to people and EDI the focus on issues such as gender balance is skewing the debate. The Chief Executive has offered a note on EDI which challenges some assumptions being made about fire and rescue services and asking that we look at issues along with other sectors, such as nursing, midwifery and primary school teaching as professions and the need to



act within Sector but also as a global issue. The EDI paper outlines some of the issues which need measurement in different ways.

6. Is there anything we can do to improve how we inspect equality, diversity and inclusion?

Linked to the above point, it would be much more helpful if the HMICFRS could take account of the entire workforce, and not just who is a member of a particular pension scheme. More than half of our business safety and customer safety teams self-identify as female – and because they are members of the LGPS they are not seen as part of a “diverse” operational workforce. It has been a contentious issue for many years that we concentrate on female operational firefighters and don’t include everyone else in the same way, including at senior management level.

7. Is there anything we can do to improve the way in which we report our findings?

Publishing in batches at the end of each tranche is accepted, although if you are at the start of the tranche it means you have to wait longer for your report, and the world may have moved on by then.

8. Is there anything else we should do to make our FRS assessments as fair as they can be?

The ongoing use of the staff survey is something we wish to challenge. You will be aware of the negative comments Kent received in the first inspection around bullying. We responded at the time with a weight of evidence of change being undertaken, yet the survey responses were still included despite their being no triangulated evidence of bullying. We then put significant resources, in both time and funding, to bring ACAS in to assess bullying. They found absolutely no evidence of any bullying occurring. We also discussed the issues openly and found that some on stations had used the survey to express discontent with the change which was needed and tightening up on performance.

The survey as designed will simply generate a negative response to change, as that has been the fire and rescue sectors traditional response. This has to be triangulated with what is found on the ground and that was not our experience in Round 1. We hope it will be different in round 2.

9. If we remove our pillar judgments, would it be easier to understand the areas in which FRSs need to improve?

We see the logic of moving to a five point grading scale.



Included in this section is a comment on thematic inspections, essentially saying the sector is not ready for thematic inspections. Our expressed view is that we are ready for thematic inspection with tailored questions depending on issues and prevailing performance of the organisation.

There is likely to be more benefit to the sector from a thematic inspection, and focusing round three on those services in the lower grades of performance, rather than attempting to cover all services again quickly after round two.

One of the potential issues for debate is whether the current inspection programme creates itself is a change inertia. No service is going to perform a significant and needed change such as closing stations, or changing duty systems in the run up to an inspection. These programmes themselves take months of planning and engagement with colleagues before they make it into the public domain. This is very hard to achieve if you are inspected fundamentally every two years – there is never a window to change unless there is a recognition that mechanisms like the survey will pick up change noise. If the HMICFRS wants to see change, it needs to allow FRS the space to deliver it. If change still isn't delivered, then the HMICFRS should rightly call it out, and we would have no issue with that.

We hope these comments are helpful.

Nick Chard

Chair – Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Ann Millington

Chief Executive

PERFORMANCE OUT-TURN 2021/22

SUMMARY

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

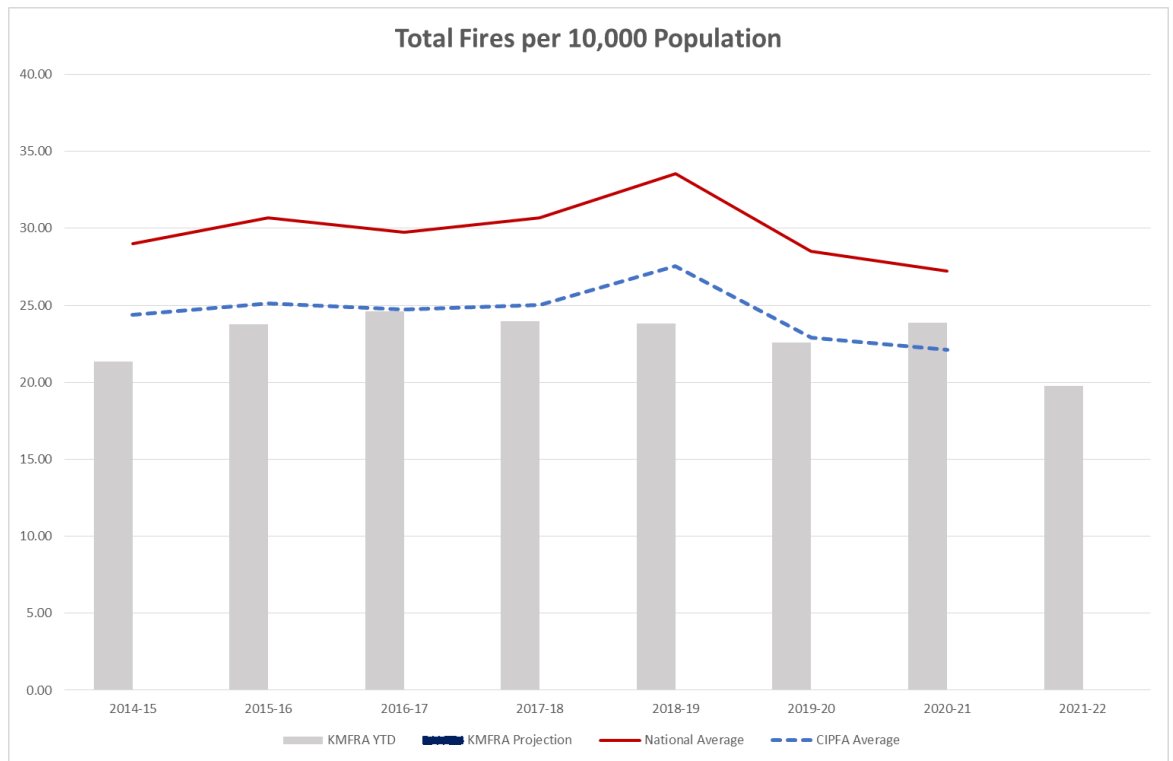
COMMENTS

Performance 2021/22

1. The medium term reporting period began on 01 April 2021. This paper reports performance against the targets for the three year period and make comparisons, where possible, to how we compare nationally with other fire services.
2. At the time of writing this report, data for the 2021/22 financial year has not been published by the Home Office. Any comparable information shown for how services are performing nationally are only available up to 2020/21.

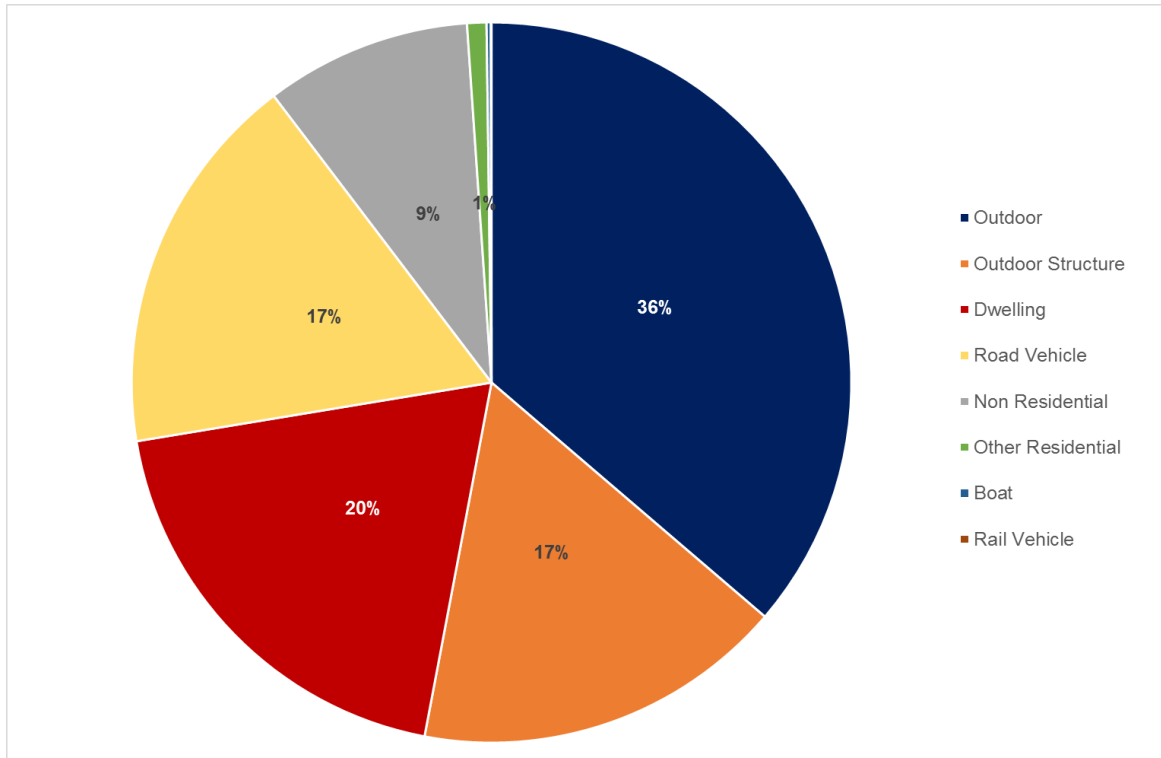
Total Fires

3. The Authority attended 3,673 fires in 2021/22 which is lower than the number reported in 2020/21 and previous years. The three year average projection for the 2021-24 period was 3,673, which is lower than the target of 4,091.
4. The lower level of fire activity experienced in 2021/22 can be attributed to a lower number of outdoor fires. These types of fires are always much higher through a warm dry summer and the summer months of 2021 did not have prolonged dry spells which will always influence the outturn of this indicator. For comparison there were 1,022 grassland fires attended in 2020 but this dropped to 546 in 2021.



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

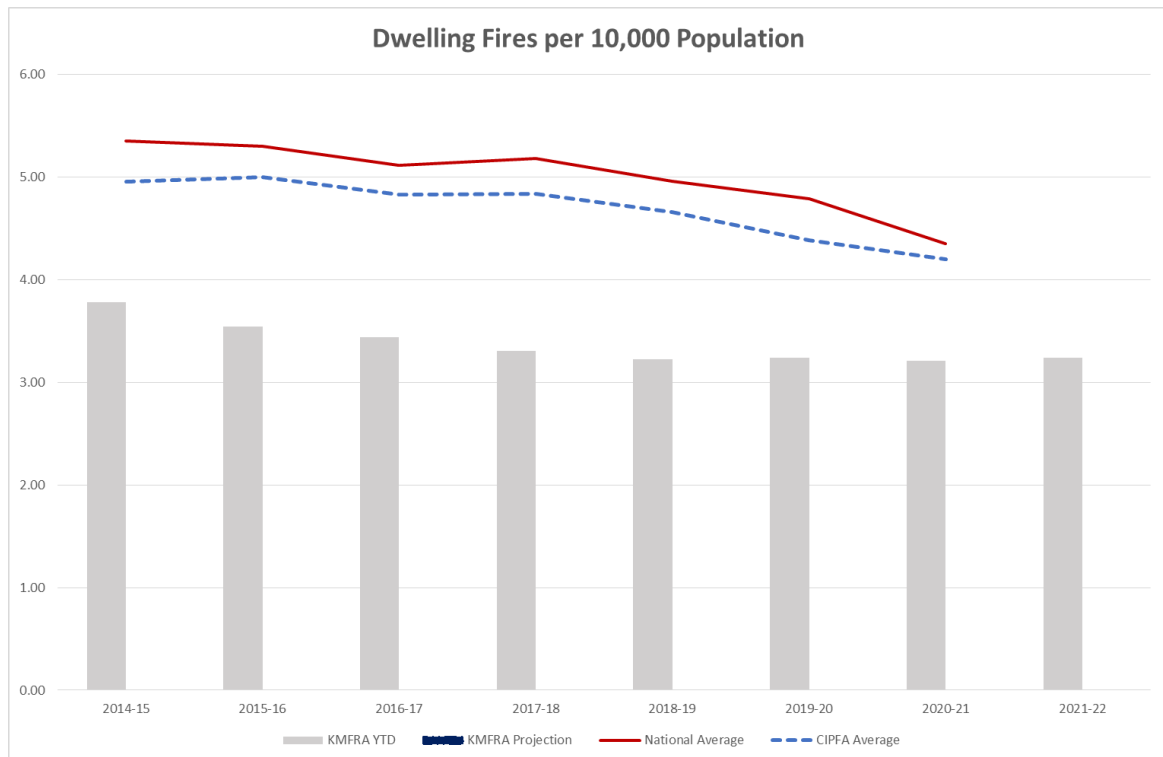
| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Outdoor | 272 | 137 | 104 | 100 | 98 | 109 | 65 | 77 | 58 | 80 | 98 | 134 |
| Outdoor Structure | 83 | 46 | 57 | 55 | 62 | 58 | 34 | 44 | 25 | 47 | 42 | 61 |
| Dwelling | 91 | 64 | 32 | 46 | 49 | 49 | 57 | 65 | 67 | 64 | 62 | 67 |
| Road Vehicle | 50 | 51 | 58 | 61 | 42 | 60 | 47 | 76 | 46 | 47 | 41 | 55 |
| Non Residential | 45 | 36 | 22 | 27 | 18 | 26 | 19 | 25 | 31 | 19 | 31 | 41 |
| Other Residential | 2 | 6 | 4 | 3 | -- | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | -- |
| Boat | -- | -- | 2 | -- | 1 | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 2 |
| Rail Vehicle | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |



Dwelling Fires

6. In recent years the Authority has reported the lowest ever number of accidental fires in the home and, encouragingly this trend is continuing. In 2021/22 524 incidents were attended which is lower than the levels seen in the previous year (545) and consistent with the number attended in both 2018/19 and 2019/20. The three year average projection for the medium term period (2021-24) is 521 which is 2.0% better than the target of 532.
7. Unfortunately accessing comparable information for fire services that fit this Authority's local performance indicator definitions is difficult. It is not possible to obtain accidental fires in the home detailed by individual authorities nor is it possible to obtain the number of dwellings in each Authority area. For the purposes of benchmarking ourselves against others we can compare all fires in the home, which although that will include those started deliberately the numbers are relatively small in comparison to those started accidentally. To ensure the number of incidents is more representative of the size of the community that is served we have used population as the denominator.
8. The chart below shows that 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 2020/2021, the latest available information, details that Kent ranks 3rd 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 over the last three years and a further 17% being attributed to electrical appliances



Fatalities and Casualties in Accidental Fires

11. Accidental fires accounted for 60% of the total fires attended last year and, as a result of these fires, eight people died and 70 people suffered fire related injuries. There was also one fatality, three serious injuries and 16 slight injuries reported as a result of deliberate fires.
12. The table below details the status of recorded casualties in accidental fires over the last three financial years. Members will notice that the overall numbers of casualties has remained reasonably static and that there has not been any real fluctuation in the number of fatalities. Please note that the difference in numbers reported against slight injuries, first aid and precautionary checks in 2020/21 when compared to previous years is due a quality assurance process highlighting an error in casualty classification. Overall the numbers remain consistent but those being recorded as slight casualties

should in fact have been recorded as first aid at scene or precautionary check recommended.

| | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | Total |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Fatal | 5 | 7 | 8 | 20 |
| Serious injury | 17 | 21 | 15 | 53 |
| Slight injury | 104 | 59 | 55 | 218 |
| First aid given at scene | 42 | 69 | 56 | 167 |
| Precautionary check | 36 | 42 | 46 | 124 |
| Total | 204 | 198 | 180 | 582 |

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

Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)

13. The Authority attended 1,043 road traffic collisions last year which is 371 more than in 2020/21. We saw a reduction in road traffic collisions in each month in 2020/21 compared to the previous year which includes a large reduction during the lockdown periods. The number of road traffic collisions attended last year is back in line with numbers we would expect and is comparable with activity levels in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
14. As a result of these incidents 26 people have died and 130 have been seriously injured.

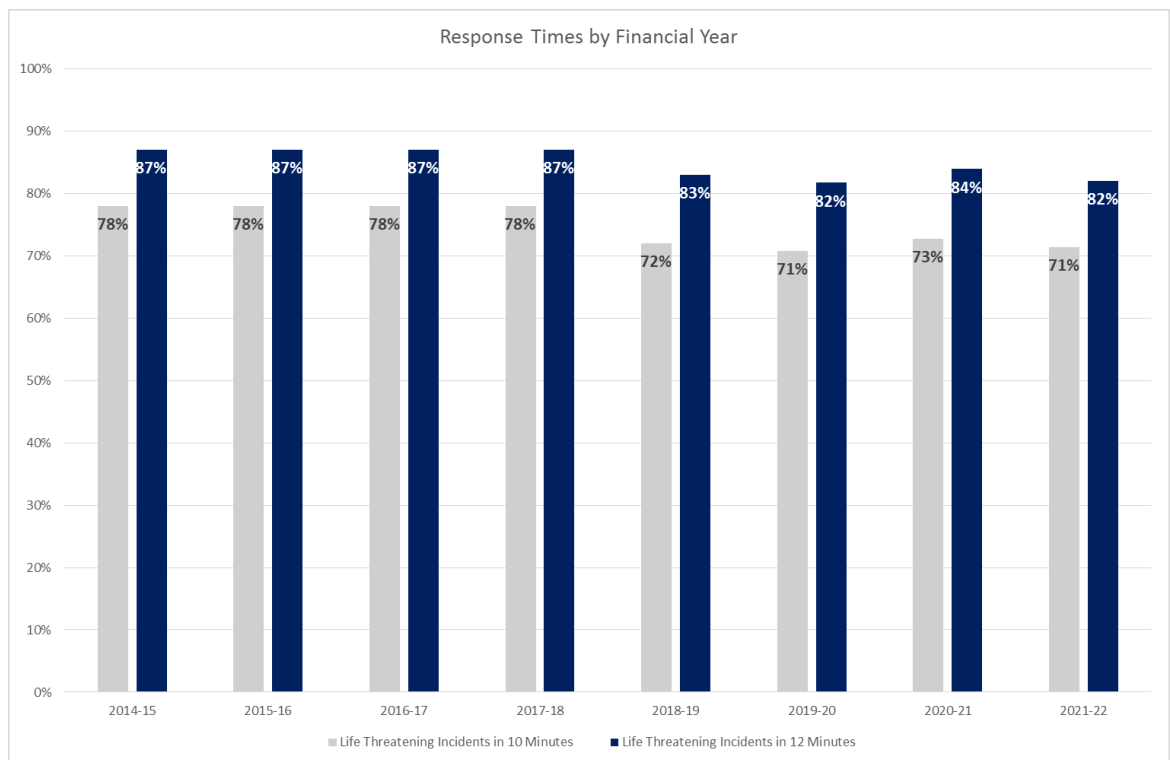
Other Emergency Special Service Incidents

15. The Authority continue to provide emergency medical response in support of SECamb. During 2021/22, 3,413 incidents were responded to and 3,085 were attended. On 372 occasions the Authority's resources were stood down before they arrived.
16. 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 788 of the incidents (25%).
17. Over the last financial year the Authority has responded to assist other agencies, for example to lift a person or assist in the search for a missing person, 2,151 times. In

addition to these crews have also responded to 1,521 incidents to gain entry to a property for either the occupier or for our emergency services colleagues.

Response Times

18. Last year 70.9% of life-threatening incidents were reached within 10 minutes and 81.7% within 12 minutes. Overall performance is slightly lower than the targets set for these indicators. Members will recall that the targets for these indicators were changed for the 2020/21 financial year to 71% and 82% respectively
19. The Authority attended life-threatening fire incidents within 10 minutes on 74.5% occasions whilst life-threatening road traffic collisions were reached within 10 minutes on 62.7% of occasions. Non-life threatening incidents were attended within 15 minutes on 90.8% of occasions.



Availability

20. In 2021/22, the Authority aimed to have an average of 50 fire engines available day and night across Kent and Medway. The number of fire engines available is heavily influenced by the availability of on-call firefighters and can therefore fluctuate over a 24 hour period. 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.

| | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|
| Day | 34 | 44 | 32 |
| Night | 50 | 57 | 48 |

21. The average number of available fire engines across both day and night time periods increased in the last year which has already mentioned, can be attributed to the pandemic. The Authority saw more on-call firefighters available, particularly during the day time, as a result of changes to their primary employment such as furlough. It is anticipated that this level of availability will not continue as we return to normal.
22. Members will recall that for 2022/23 onwards the Authority aims to have a minimum of 32 with an aspiration of 44 fire engines available day and night across Kent and Medway as detailed in the recently agreed Safety and Wellbeing plan.

Customer and Business Safety

23. During 2021/22, the Authority's Customer Safety teams delivered 10,874 Safe and Well Visits to customers across the County. In addition to these visits, 1,287 telephone assessments have been carried out. In addition, on-duty crews completed 10,609 Home Fire Safety Visits through the year.
24. Between April 2021 and March 2022 Building Safety teams completed 1,383 audits of premises in the County in line with the risk based inspection programme.
25. The level of building consultations received by the Authority increased in 2021/22 when compared to the previous year (1,495) to 1,937. Of these consultations, 1,656 were completed within 21 days which equates to 85%.

Corporate Health

26. During 2021/22, 4.46% of all contracted hours have been lost due to sickness which is higher than 2020/21 (3.11%). Operational staff lost 5.54% of contracted hours to sickness and corporate teams' staff lost 1.94%. We did not see sickness levels change significantly during the first lockdown period, however levels did increase over the

2021 autumn and winter period which is a reflection of the increased presence of Covid-19 across Kent and Medway. It is important to note that any periods of isolation is not included in sickness figures.

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. 13 RIDDOR-reportable injuries were recorded in 2021/22.

**MINUTES OF PENSION BOARD MEETING
10 May 2022**

Present:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Mark Rist (MR) | KFRS (Employer Representative) |
| Matthew Deadman (MD) | KFRS (Employer Representative) |
| Alison Kilpatrick (AK) | Director Finance and Corporate Services |
| Barrie Fullbrook (BF) | Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions |
| David Stanbury (DS) | Pensions Manager (Scheme Manager Representative) |
| David Broughton (DBr) | FBU (Deputy Employee Representative) |
| Lawrence Pater (LP) | FOA (Employee Representative) |

Apologies:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Danny Barrett (DB) | FBU (Employee Representative) |
| Dylan McEvoy (DM) | FRSA Representative (Employee Representative) |
| Karen Pointer (KP) | FOA (Deputy Employee Representative) |

Other attendees

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Item 1 only | Claire Hey, Senior Pensions Adviser - LGA |
|-------------|---|

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| NEXT MEETING | Date: 7 September 2022 |
| | Venue: Skype |
| | Time: 10.00 |

1. Pension Board Training

Training was provided to the Board by the LGA.

Action: MC to circulate the presentation.

2. Declarations of Interest of Items on this agenda

None.

3. Minutes of the Pension Board held on 16 February 2022

LPP Monthly Report (item 5)

DS provided an update on his action from the last meeting in relation to complaints received from some members about the time it is taking to get their pension figures from LPP once they have given notice of their intention to retire. DS said that he has had a meeting with HR to raise and discuss these issues which they have taken on board and as a result have put extra mechanisms in place between the HRBPs and HR Advisers to create that resilience so they can work with LPP in a timely manner to provide the information required. MR agreed that the resilience needs to be there but stated that it is also a balance around ensuring that enough notice is given by individuals who do want to retire to allow the work in the background to take place. AK said that this is where it would be useful to have KPIs not only measure performance but to also help individuals manage their expectations on when they are likely to receive the information they require about their pension.

Buying Back into Pension Scheme Process (Item AOB)

DS informed the Board that he has spoken to the FOA member who raised a query about the process for buying back into the scheme following a gap. This action has now been resolved.

The minutes from the Pension Board meeting held on 16 February 2022 were agreed as a true record.

4. Pension Board Action Log - Update on Progress

DS reported that there were no changes to the log since the last meeting. DS confirmed that he is currently refreshing the way in which actions are captured on the log and this new format will be ready in time for the next meeting.

5. LPP Monthly Report

DS provided an update on his recent quarterly meeting with LPP. DS said that he had fed back to LPP that some members were reporting issues in accessing the online service and if they did get on, there didn't appear to be as much information that was accessible as there was previously before the new system was upgraded in April. DS said that with all new system implementations there are teething problems but LPP has taken these issues away as an action to investigate which DS said that he will follow up with them. **(Action: DS)**

BF asked whether there was any discussion with LPP around what the Member Benefit Illustrations would now show in light of the changes in the McCloud case. DS said that there wasn't a discussion about this but he can follow this query up with them. **(Action DS)**. He added that any changes will not be shown in this year's statements due to the short timeframe. AK said that the Benefits Statements are unlikely to show the two sets of figures for final salary and CARE Scheme until after August 2024 as that is when legislation may be available to support the changes.

DS said that following on from this morning's training by the LGA, he will review the way in which the LPP monthly report is presented and ensure that this is circulated to the Board at least a week before the meeting date so that there is enough time for attendees to review. **(Action DS)**

6. Update on Cases (Standing Item)

McCloud vs Sargent Case

DS said that there is no further update at this stage. The risk associated with the tax implications still remains an issue.

O'Brian Case

DS said that there is work underway to complete a survey received from the LGA with details of who is affected by this case. This needs to be completed by end of June.

AK added that this case will also affect people who have already retired so it will be a role for this Board to scrutinise the process and what efforts have been made to contact those people.

IDRP Cases

DS reported that there have been two IDRP Stage 2 cases since the Board last met, one surrounding an Immediate Detriment payment and the other in relation to a complaint around the appropriate due diligence not being undertaken with regards to the transfer of pension funds. Both cases were reviewed by a Member Panel and the appeals not upheld.

7. AOB

FPS 92 and 2006 Scheme Memberships

As a result of removing the age discrimination due to the tapered protection given to members it was decided that with effect from 1 April 2022 no member would be able to contribute to the old 92 or 2006 Schemes. DS said that as this was mentioned as part of the LGA training this morning as an action that Pension Boards may wish to follow up on, he can confirm that there are no members from this authority who are building up membership in either Scheme post 1st April 22. DS said he will make a note of this on the action log. **(Action: DS)**