



KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting of the Authority

Thursday, 13 October 2022

10.30 am

AGENDA

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Thursday, 13 October 2022, 10.30 am
held at Kent Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, The Godlands, Maidstone,
ME15 6XB

Ask for: Marie Curry
Telephone: (01622) 692121 ext 8291

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

A Routine Business

- A1. Chairman's Announcements *(if any)*
- A2. Membership Changes and Apologies for Absence
- A3. Declarations of Interest in Items on this Agenda
- A4. Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 28 April 2022 *(for information)*
- A5. Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 5 July 2022 *(for approval)*

B For Decision

- B1. Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2023
- B2. Finance Update 2022/23
- B3. Development of the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023 - 2027 *(Presentation)*
- B4. Governance and Policy Updates
- B5. Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22
- B6. Mid-Year Treasury and Investment Update 2022/23
- B7. Calendar of Meetings and other Events

C For Information

- C1. Report to the Authority on the Work of the Audit and Governance Committee
- C2. Information Update (Consolidated Report)

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

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

Marie Curry
Clerk to the Authority
3 October 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.

This page has been left blank

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on Thursday, 28 April 2022 at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

PRESENT:- Mr N Collor, Mr P Harman, Ms S Hudson, Mr V Maple (Chair), Ms L Parfitt-Reid, Mr C Simkins and Mr S Tranter (Vice Chair).

APOLOGIES: - Mr A Booth, Mr D Daley and Mr P Cole

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; Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions Mrs N Walker, Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions, Barrie Fullbrook and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: - Mr P Cuttle, Grant Thornton and Ms F Smith ,KCC Internal Audit

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

10. Chair's Announcements

(Item A1)

- (1) Members of the Committee stood for a minute's silence to pay respects to Tom Mason, former Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority Vice Chair and the Chair of the previous established Audit and Governance Committee.
- (2) The Chair welcomed Paul Cuttle, Grant Thornton, to the meeting.
- (3) The Chair welcomed Frankie Smith, KCC Internal Audit, to the meeting.

11. Minutes – 25 November 2021

(Item A4)

- (1) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 25 November 2021, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

12. Corporate Risk Register

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

- (1) The Committee received the latest update on the Corporate Risk Register for consideration. Members were reassured that good progress continues to be made on a number of the action plans, which will help mitigate or reduce respective potential risks.
- (2) In response to a question raised by Mr Tranter around what is the criteria for a risk that is deemed 'no longer critical' being removed from the Register and how this is justified

because a risk is still a risk even if it's a possibility, the Head of Finance, Mrs N Walker, responded by saying that even when a risk is removed from the Register because it is now not deemed as a 'critical risk' that would essentially affect the Service's ability to carry out its statutory duties, the risk is still being monitored through internal Strategic Boards.

- (3) In response to a concern raised by Mr Collor with regards to the removal of Covid off the Register, the Head of Finance, Mrs N Walker provided reassurances that even though Covid has been removed from the Register as a corporate risk, this is still monitored within the Service's Business Continuity Plans.
- (4) In response to a question raised by Mr Maple around cyber security and what the Service is doing to mitigate this risk, bearing in mind some high profile cases in the media of late, the Director Finance and Corporate Services responded by providing assurances to Members that a lot of work does go on behind the scenes to limit the potential risks of a cyber-attack and offered that the Head of Information Technology and Business Change attends the next meeting to provide Members with a presentation on the work that is being undertaken which was welcomed by the Committee.
- (5) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) the amendments 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 escalation of a potential cyber-attack in line with Government guidance, be approved.
 - (c) A presentation on the work the Service is doing to mitigate the risk of a cyber-attack at the next meeting of the Committee, be approved.
 - (d) the contents of the report be noted.

13. Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework and Action Plan Update

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

- (1) The Committee received the updated versions of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework; the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Action Plan and the Fraud Response Plan for consideration. The Committee also received the Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally (FFCL) Checklist to note.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

- (b) the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Action Plan, as attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
- (c) the Fraud Response Plan, as attached as Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.
- (d) the inclusion of the Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally (FFCL) Checklist be noted.

14. External Auditors Draft Audit Plan for 2021/22 and the Audit Risk Assessment

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

- (1) Mr Paul Cuttle, Grant Thornton, introduced for Members' consideration, the External Auditors Draft Audit Plan for 2021/22 as well as the template for informing the Audit Risk Assessment.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the Audit Risk Assessment, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
 - (b) the External Auditors Draft Audit Plan for 2021/22, as attached Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
 - (c) The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Grant Thornton for their work.

15. Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 and Audit Charter

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

- (1) Ms F Smith, Head of KCC Internal Audit, introduced for Members' consideration, the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23, along with the Audit Charter and Key Performance Indicators.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23, as set out in Annex 1 of Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
 - (b) the Internal Audit Charter, as set out in Annex 2 of Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
 - (c) the proposed Key Performance Indicators for the Internal Audit, as set out in Annex 3 to Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
 - (d) the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, placed on records its thanks to KCC Internal Audit for their work.

16. Treasury Management Update

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

- (1) Since the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2022/23 was agreed in principle by this Committee at its last meeting in November, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has published a revised Treasury Management Code and Prudential Code, with full implementation of the new Codes expected by 2023/24.
- (2) The Committee received an overview of the updated Code requirements, along with the Treasury Management Policy Statement and the revised Treasury Management Practices for consideration.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the adoption of the Treasury Management Policy Statement, as attached at Appendix 1 to this report be approved.
 - (b) the adoption of the revised Treasury Management Practices, as attached at Appendix 2 to this report, be approved.

17. Internal Audit Progress Report for 2021/22

(Item C1 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)

- (1) Ms F Smith from KCC Internal Audit, introduced for Members' consideration, the Internal Audit Progress report. This report provided an update of the work that has been concluded by KCC Internal Audit, on behalf of the Authority, against the 2021/22 Audit Plan, a summary of which was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.
- (2) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) The contents of the report be noted.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held on Tuesday 5 July 2022 at the Cornwallis Suite, Courtenay Road, Maidstone ME15 6LF.

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

APOLOGIES:- Mr A Booth, Mr D Beaney, Mr D Daley, Mr P Harman, Mr S Manion and Mr V Maple.

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:- Mr M R Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner and V Nutley, Deputy Monitoring Officer.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chair for 2022/23

(Item A1)

- (1) Mr Tranter moved, Mr Simkins seconded, that Mr Chard be elected Chair of the Authority.
- (2) There being no other nominations Mr N Chard was declared the elected Chair of the Authority for 2022/23.

2. Election of Vice-Chair for 2022/23

(Item A2)

- (1) Mr Chard moved, Mr Simkins seconded, that Mr Tranter be elected Vice-Chair of the Authority.
- (2) There being no other nominations Mr S Tranter was declared the elected Vice-Chair of the Authority for 2022/23.

3. Chair's Announcements

(Item A3)

- (1) Members held a minute's silence as a mark of respect to former Member and Vice Chair of the Authority, Tom Mason, whose death was announced in March.
- (2) The Chair welcomed Vicky Nutley, the Authority's Deputy Monitoring Officer to the meeting.
- (3) Members placed on record their congratulations to Principal Fire Engineer, Paul Grimwood, on receiving his MBE in the Queen's 2022 Birthday Honours.
- (4) Members placed on record their thanks and appreciation to colleagues in helping the Service achieve the Pride in Care Quality Standard Award for its commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. KFRS is the only emergency service in the Country to receive this accolade.
- (5) Members placed on record their thanks and appreciation to colleagues across the Service for their involvement in supporting the Ukraine aid efforts.

4. Membership

(Item A5)

- (1) The list of Members appointed by the constituent Councils to serve on the Authority for 2022/23 was noted.

5. Audit and Governance Committee – 25 November 2021

(Item A6)

- (1) RESOLVED that: -
- (a) the Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 25 November 2021 be noted.

6. Hearings Panel– 18 February 2022

(Item A7)

- (1) RESOLVED that: -
- (a) the Minutes of the Hearings Panel held on 18 February 2022 be noted.

7. Minutes of the Authority – 21 February 2022

(Item A8)

- (1) RESOLVED that: -
- (a) the Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 21 February be approved and signed as a true record.

8. Hearings Panel – 27 April 2022

(Item A9)

- (1) RESOLVED that: -
- (a) the minutes of the Hearings Panel held on 27 April 2022 be noted.

9. Appointment to Committees and Outside Bodies for 2022/23

(Item B1 - Report by Clerk to the Authority)

- (1) The Authority reviewed its scheme of proportionality as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and then considered various matters relating to the appointment of Members to Committees and outside bodies for 2022/23.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
- (a) for the purposes of the statutory annual review of proportionality, and without any Member voting against, the allocation of places to the political groups on the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee as detailed in paragraphs 4 and 5 and shown in Table 1 of the report, be approved for 2022/23;
- (b) as in previous years, Hearings Panels, if and when needed in 2022/23, comprise four Members (one drawn from each of the four parties and where required on the nomination of the Group's Leader);
- (c) the Authority continues in the membership of the outside bodies to which it currently belongs, and the allocation of places and voting rights on the LGA General Assembly between the political groups, as shown in Table 2 to the report, be approved for 2022/23.

10. Final Provisional Outturn 2021/22

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

- (1) The Authority considered a report relating to the final provisional outturn on revenue and capital spend for 2021/22 as well as details of the resultant transfer to Earmarked Reserves.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the transfer of £1m of the final revenue budget underspend to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve be approved.
 - (b) any final underspend in excess of £1m (provisionally £707k) be transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve be approved.
 - (c) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

11. Financial Update 2021/22

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

- (1) The Authority considered the first report for the 2022/23 financial year which provided an overview of the spend against the revenue and capital budgets forecast for the year as well as a number of other financial related issues.
- (2) Mr Cole sought reassurances from officers on the resilience of the Service's current fleet of vehicles considering the long delays in delivery timeframes for new appliances and pool cars. In response to this the Assistant Director, Response said that for some time the Service has been operating a flexible resourcing approach with its vehicles which has put us in a good position in terms of any impacts from the delays. He added that the Service also has a reserved fleet which it can utilise if the need arises.
- (3) Members gave their thanks to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and her team, for the exemplary way in which the management of the Authority's finances is handled.
- (4) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the potential draw down on reserves to meet in-year pressures, if the additional funding needed cannot be met from the resources within the existing base budget be approved in principle;
 - (b) the authorisation criteria for signing land and building documentation under seal be approved.
 - (c) the Special Severance Payment approval limits be noted.
 - (d) the position with regards to progressing Immediate Detriment be noted
 - (e) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

12. Customer Safety Plan

(Item B4 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered a report which provided updates on the progress made in delivering the Customer Safety Plan and the six supporting strategies that underpin it; the new projects that have recently started as well as sets out the key strategic indicators which were agreed as part of last year's Plan which are used to monitor progress.

- (2) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the balance scorecard of performance measures for 2022/23, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
 - (b) the annually set targets outside those in the balance scorecard be approved.
 - (c) the progress in delivering the Customer Safety Plan, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
 - (d) the revised history of change document be noted.

13. Governance and Policy Updates

(Item B5 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered a report which sought agreement to a number of policies as well as other governance related issues.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) The draft response to the consultation on the Reforming our Fire and Rescue Services White Paper, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
 - (b) the Transparency in Supply Chains Statement, as at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
 - (c) the Supplier Code of Conduct Policy, as at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.
 - (d) the Social Media Policy, as at Appendix 4 to the report, be approved.
 - (e) the Legal Assistance Policy, as at Appendix 5 to the report, be approved.
 - (f) the Allegations Against Staff Policy, as at Appendix 6 to the report, be approved.
 - (g) the Environment Policy, as at Appendix 7 to the report, be approved.
 - (h) the lease for the Authority's 999 Control Room at Coldharbour be signed.

14. Information Update

(Item C1 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered information updates on: -
 - A. Inspection Update
 - B. Performance Outturn and Update
 - C. Response and Resilience Update
 - D. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update
 - E. Freedom of Information Update
 - F. Customer Feedback Update
 - G. Pensions and Pension Board Update
- (2) On Item C above and in response to a discussion around lithium-ion batteries, the Chair asked for a report to the next meeting detailing the challenges the Service is facing when attending incidents involving electric vehicles.

- (3) On Item D above, Ms Constantine placed on record her thanks to the Service for its work on prevention in the Ramsgate area.
- (4) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) The contents of the report be noted.

EXEMPT ITEMS
(Open Access to Minutes)

15. Abatement

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

- (1) The Authority considered a report on an abatement issue.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the recommendations contained within the report, be approved.

This page has been left blank

By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority - 13 October 2022

Subject: SAFETY AND WELLBEING PLAN 2023

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

The Authority is required to produce a Safety and Wellbeing Plan (referred to as the Integrated or Community Risk Management Plan in guidance) which sets out the key changes to the way it provides services to the communities and businesses of Kent and Medway. This helps us create transparency in what we do and engage with our customers to design the services they need.

This year's proposed Plan provides an update on performance and focuses on current campaigns in customer safety being run by the Authority and briefly touches on refreshing the long-term risk assessment used by the Authority to frame the actions it needs to take in the coming ten years and seeks views from the public in relation to the change in Council Tax next year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the publication for consultation of the draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2023, subject to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, being authorised to make any minor amendments that may be necessary to the text of the Plan (paragraph 8 and **Appendix 1** refer).
2. Approve the revisions to the long-term assessment of possible changes in the physical, political and technological landscape (paragraph 9 and **Appendix 2** refer).

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

COMMENTS

Background

1. The Government sets out its expectations of fire and rescue services in a document called the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework. The most recent version was published in 2018. Part of the framework deals with how fire and rescue services must complete and maintain a risk assessment of their local area and consult with the public and other relevant stakeholders on how it will seek to manage any risks it identifies. The mechanism for consultation is a document called an Integrated Risk Management Plan. Although the framework itself has not been amended, this name was amended by the sector to “Community Risk Management Plan” in 2021.
2. Several years ago, the Authority took the decision to move away from referring to this document as an Integrated Risk Management Plan, as this name was felt to be meaningless to the average member of the public. After a number of iterations, the name Safety and Wellbeing Plan was agreed in 2015. Whilst it is a legal requirement on fire and rescue services, publishing a Safety and Wellbeing Plan is important in its own right as we want to be transparent to our customers and inform and engage them in service design to meet their needs.
3. This document is usually intended to inform customers about changes we intend to make, or would like customers’ views on, before they are enacted. Current activities, and our long-term risk assessment for Kent and Medway are covered in other documents, which are available on our website. The principal document is the Customer Safety Plan which Members considered and approved at the July 2021 meeting of the Authority and refreshed at the meeting of the Authority held on 5 July 2022. The other important document is our risk assessment for Kent. This is refreshed annually alongside the Safety and Wellbeing Plan and is substantially refreshed periodically, the next refresh being due to report in 2023, alongside a review of emergency response.
4. Added together these three documents meet the Community Risk Management Planning Fire Services Standard published by the Fire Standards Board, and the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services (2018) to publish an integrated risk management plan.

Summary of 2023 Plan

5. As the Plan for this year is more of an update on performance, the document itself is shorter than previous year’s Plans, and draws on content already published on the Authority’s website. This content has not been replicated into the draft Members are asked to consider, but a link has been provided. The major issues covered are:
 - What customers get for their money in the form of a visual performance update

- Current campaigns being run by customer safety, especially those related to emerging issues such as electrical and home safety,
 - An overview of the timeline for a forthcoming fundamental review of emergency response, which covers all service delivery to customers
 - Proposals on Council Tax options for 2023/24.
6. There are no proposals for any station closures, removal of fire engines, or compulsory redundancies of firefighters contained in the Plan.
 7. Consultation on the Plan will run from 24 October 2022 to 13 January 2023. It is designed to be an accessible online publication and utilise existing content on the Authority's website for detailed information about our campaigns and referral mechanisms. No printed copies of the Plan will be produced, but it will be possible to print copies on demand although the customer experience of using this route will be poorer. Experience from the last three Plans indicates there is very little, if any, demand for hard copies.
 8. The draft update and questionnaire are attached at **Appendix 1**. Like previous Plans, the proposed questionnaire is embedded in **Appendix 1**, rather than being presented as a separate appendix. This more accurately reflects how the document will feel when being read online. Respondents are asked to comment on the issues raised in the Plan, and to select their preferred option in terms of changes in the Council Tax precept.
 9. Also attached at **Appendix 2** is a ten year risk assessment. Members will recall this formed part of the Customer Safety Plan published in July 2021 and was republished in June 2022. It has been reviewed and remains fit for purpose, having scrutinised a number of recent documents published by government agencies and local authorities since the beginning of the year. The minor amendments made are highlighted in red font. Members are requested to approve the amendments highlighted in **Appendix 2** for publication alongside the Plan.
 10. Similar marketing will be performed compared to last year which delivered higher levels of engagement, but it is not anticipated similar numbers will be achieved in terms of responses as there is little in the way of immediate change contained in this Plan. It is however not anticipated that there will be significant media interest or a demand for interviews with officers or the Chair of the Authority. Officers will provide any briefings to external partners or Members of other authorities as requested. Social media and existing contacts held securely by the Authority with the consent of the data subject will be used to generate responses.
 11. The risk assessment published last year will be reviewed and republished on the Authority's website.

12. Members are requested to approve the Plan attached at **Appendix 1** for consultation with the public and key stakeholders.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

13. Responses to the questionnaire which supports the Plan are collated electronically and analysed, to enable a full report to be presented to Members at the Budget meeting in February 2023. Limited personal data will be collected as part of this Plan from customers that respond. Experience in recent years has shown that response levels are such that any detailed analysis by protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 is statistically meaningless.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. Members are requested to:
 - 14.1 Approve the publication for consultation of the draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2023, subject to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, being authorised to make any minor amendments that may be necessary to the text of the Plan (paragraph 8 and **Appendix 1** refer).
 - 14.2 Approve the revisions to the long-term assessment of possible changes in the physical, political and technological landscape (paragraph 9 and **Appendix 2** refer).

Safety and Wellbeing Plan - 2023

Together

Reading time approx. 15 minutes

Chair's Introduction

Welcome to our Safety and Wellbeing Plan for 2023. This is a shorter plan than usual and tells you what we have been working on recently, our current safety campaigns and how we have performed. We have also given a summary of what you receive as a customer, for the money you pay as part of your council tax to help run the fire and rescue service across Kent and Medway.

We would welcome your comments on a number of options regarding council tax levels for 2023/24.

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

Nick Chard

Chair – Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Box 1: About this document

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

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

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

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

What do you get for your money

There in times of need

- Our 999 operators answered 42,618 emergency 999 calls
- 21,608 incidents were attended last year – an increase of 21%
- We have specialist teams for a range of incidents including water, mud and cliff rescue, chemical incidents, animal rescue, explosions and terrorism

Incidents and activity

- Thanks in part to the efforts of our customer safety teams, we attended just 562 house fires... but 47% of fires in the home still start in the kitchen
- Crews with specialist trauma care and rescue equipment went to 1,089 road crashes
- We went to 2,966 medical emergencies where our firefighters were closer than the nearest ambulance (which was mobilised at the same time)
- Summer 2022 was the busiest period for grass fires in the last decade

Helping you stay safe

- Last year we carried out 10,794 visits to homes of higher-risk customers
- Firefighters visit specialist sites and buildings to build their knowledge of sites in their local area
- Our online social media content has been viewed more than 75m million times
- 10,000 customers visited our summer station open days
- We have continued to invest in our building safety team to help keep businesses and our customers safe
- We audited more than 1,500 business premises across Kent and Medway
- We have completed a review of all residential buildings over 18m in Kent and Medway

NB for drafting: Figures quoted are 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022

What has changed since last year?

We have been inspected...

We were inspected by the government's inspectorate in summer 2022. The team spoke to firefighters and customer safety colleagues across the organisation, and members of our support teams. They also spoke to the other agencies we work with such as the Police and local authorities. The results will be published in early 2023. Our early feedback told us we are performing well at keeping customers safe across Kent and Medway.

It was hot and dry this summer...

Over the summer of 2022, we experienced the largest number of open-air fires we have ever had. It was driven by the exceptionally dry weather, but sadly some of the fires were started deliberately. This puts customers' property and potentially their lives in danger and ties up firefighters on long incident.

We attended 1,451 fires between 1 July and 17 August and this is thought to be the busiest summer period we've ever had. More than 1,100 of these were in the open air.

Because we can flex the number of fire engines up and down constantly to meet demand, we successfully dealt with all the big incidents across Kent and Medway we were called to during the summer. We are working with landowners and farmers across Kent and Medway to help prevent future fires. With the climate changing, we think we are likely to see these kinds of demands more frequently during the summer. For this reason we are reviewing the specialist equipment and off-road capability we have.

We've got more on-call fire engines available for 999 calls...

Regular readers of this plan may remember that the availability of on-call fire engines has been an issue for us for several years. In April 2022, we made changes to how we use our on-call firefighters, giving them more flexibility to provide us with additional hours of their time. This has given us better and more consistent availability at the times when we need it.

We have also put in place a new home safety taskforce, using on-call firefighters, to do even more visits to people's homes to provide home safety advice. They have completed 2500 visits so far. And when needed, we can immediately convert them to a firefighting crew, something we did successfully during the hot weather.

Accessing our services

Why do we use the term Customer?

Over the last few years, we have developed a stronger customer focus. This is one of our big priorities because it supports our ambition to help keep everyone safe, as well as ensure our services are accessible and tailored to individual's needs.

We get asked why we use the term *customer*. We use this phrase because there are 1.8 million people who live in Kent and Medway, and many more who visit and travel through the area. We hope the vast majority will never need to dial 999, but they do experience our services through our role as the regulator for the safety of buildings, our prevention work and our community work. We cannot think of a more appropriate phrase for the majority of people if not customers. Added to this is that fact that everyone pays for us directly through Council Tax and indirectly by government grant (which comes from general taxation, such as VAT). The final reason we use customer is it has opened up our ability to benchmark our approaches with all the organisations globally and learn from them.

Improving equality of access to our services

We know through our incident data that some groups are more likely to have a fire. These groups include people who live with dementia, and those with mobility issues, or mental health issues. There are other groups who are not necessarily showing in our data as being at higher risk from having a fire, but may not be accessing our services because of other barriers such as language, perceived prejudice and other societal factors.

We've worked hard this year to get out into communities following the pandemic. We are proud to be accredited to a number of organisations from the Armed Forces Covenant and the National Fire Chiefs Council, to being part of the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme. We are also proud to be the first emergency service to achieve the Pride in Care Quality Standard.

We work together with organisations and institutions to provide the best service for our customers and each other. We went to most of the Kent Pride events reaching LGBTQ+ communities. It's been great to speak to a wide range of customers and to offer representation and demonstrate that we're a fire service that is here for everybody.

We held six fire station 'Summer Open Days' which were attended by 10,000 people, old and young, and from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Our campaigns...

Together with our customers, we work to make Kent and Medway even safer, helping people in their homes, places of work and education to lead safer lives. Here are a selection of our current campaigns for the home and for businesses and ways to find out more.

Our home safety services: Kent Fire and Rescue Service offers free home fire safety visits, which means you can talk with one of our friendly officers in the comfort of your home. You'll receive fire safety advice relevant to you and provides you with an opportunity to talk about any safety concerns you may have. [Home fire safety visits | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org)

Save safely: we want to help you to save money safely when cutting costs in response to the rising cost of living. That's why we've created a Save Safely campaign to share money saving tips while helping to keep you safe and reduce your fire risk.

If you're thinking about doing things differently at home to bring down the price of energy bills, it's important to remember do so safely. This can include thinking about the hazards that come with changing your usual routine. To find out more visit [Savesafely | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org)

Worried about a young person starting fires? We're here to help...: We have a dedicated team of firesetter advisors who work with anyone up to the age of 18 that has an unhealthy interest or fascination with fire. The team work with young people and offer them fire safety advice, education and mentoring find out more [Firesetter intervention | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org)

Electrical safety: We all have plugs and sockets in our home, but did you know overloaded sockets can cause fires. Find out more [Electricity safety | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org). A kitchen fire safety campaign also launches in November 2022.

Chimney safety: By having your chimney and flue swept and inspected regularly, you can help to prevent a chimney fire and structural damage to your property. Find out more [Chimneys and open fires | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org)

Business safety advice: If you run a business or are a 'responsible person', you have a legal duty to ensure your business complies with the Fire Safety Order. Learn about your obligations and how our Business Safety Team can help and advise [Business safety advice | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org)

Fire risk assessments: Businesses are legally required to carry out a fire risk assessment. The type of assessment you need will depend on your type of business. Learn what you need to do and how we can help. [Fire risk assessments | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org)

Fire alarms: Businesses must have appropriate fire safety precautions in place, including fire alarms. Learn about the requirement for alarms, reducing false alarms, and automatic fire alarms. [Fire alarms | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org)

Looking forwards...

Prices are rising for everyone

War in Ukraine, shortages of raw materials such as computer chips, the impacts of the UK exit from the EU, and inflation have all contributed to make everything more expensive for everyone.

Like other industries, significant claims for pay rises are being put forward. There is a risk that while consultation on this Plan is open that some firefighters may choose to go on strike. If this happens we will continue to provide a 999 emergency service across Kent and Medway using firefighters that are not striking. We will work hard with our unions to make sure that there is no conflict between those who choose to strike and those who choose to work. Most of all though we hope that nationally a pay award can be agreed which is affordable for all fire and rescue services and prevents the need for action which could impact on you, our customers.

Changes to legislation...

In the Queen's speech in June 2022, a lot of new legislation was proposed which will have an impact on us. These range from how we buy goods and services, how we manage and protect data we hold, proposals to deliver the government's levelling up agenda, and the possible replacement of the Human Rights Act. At the time of writing there is very limited detail available on what these bills might include.

Reviewing what resources we need...

Every five years or so, we do a review of the resources we need to reduce risk across Kent and Medway, and to keep customers safe. This includes how many fire engines we need, how many colleagues working in customer safety doing home safety visits we need, and how many people working with businesses we need. It is a holistic review of all that we do, and the risks we need to manage.

We do this by looking at the number of incidents we have attended in the past and estimate how we think this will change.

We look at new developments being built. We look at new emerging incident types. An example is fire caused by e-scooters and charging cables which seems to be an emerging issue. Electric vehicles also present very different challenges to us if they catch fire as they are very difficult to put out. Solar farms, of which a few have been proposed for Kent and Medway, present the same challenges but on a much bigger scale.

As noted earlier, longer dryer summers are now becoming the norm as climate changes. We need to make sure that we can flex our resources so that we can deal with more incidents in the summer months.

We will make proposals arising from this work in the summer of 2023. This is earlier than usual, to allow us to consider feedback from consultation and reflect it in the budget we will set in February 2024.

No significant changes will be made before April 2024.

Our current assessment of what the future could look like is published here. Please take a look and if you can, answer the following question [NB: content replicated for Members benefit at the end of this plan for drafting purposes].

- 1. Free text box: Are there other issues we should also consider in planning for the future?**

Setting the Council Tax

- 2. The average Band D property pays just over £1.58 per week in council tax (£82.35 per year) to help run Kent Fire and Rescue Service - do you think this provides good value?** on a scale of 1-5 (5 Good value and 1 being not good value) **LINK or footnote to say band D Property

- 3. We welcome your views on the following council tax options for 2023/24 and ask which one you would prefer:**

Option 1: Freeze council tax for a year

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

Option 3: If there is flexibility to do so, would you agree to an increase between 2% - 5%. This would mean for an average Band D property, the weekly increase could be between 3p and 8p a week.

Option 4: If there is flexibility to do so, would you agree to an increase between 5% - 8%. This would mean for an average Band D property, the weekly increase could be between 8p and 13p a week.

(Central Government set the maximum amount by which we can increase Council Tax each year and we can set council tax at any percentage up to that level, without a public referendum. The maximum level of council tax increases has not yet been set by the government, so we are interested in your view as to the level of increase that you would be prepared to pay for your Fire and Rescue Service).

- 4. Free text box: If you have any comments on the council tax options for 2023/24 please enter them here.**

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

Standard data collection field will also be added of name, area and email address.

How we think the world will change in the next ten years

We published the table below as part of our annual Plan, the Customer Safety Plan. We think it is still as accurate a picture of potential changes we can produce. New content is highlighted in red.

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

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

		behaviour for initial incident commanders	
The environment			
Climate change, environmental decline and competition for resources	The impact of global warming becomes globally obvious. Demand and competition for many natural resources, including food, water, energy and rare earth materials becomes increasingly unsustainable.	Materials of improvements to the estate rise in price. Energy prices rise	Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement
	The amounts and frequency of rainfall will change. There will be increased local flooding with more flash flooding occurring, putting increased pressure on infrastructure, water resources and local economies.	Increased demand for flood and rescues, potentially leading to a statutory duty for fire and rescue services	Response and Resilience
	Severe weather events such as droughts, heat waves, flooding, severe gales and snowfall are likely to increase. In the longer term, extreme weather may affect where people live, work and spend their leisure time.	Increased demand for medical emergency and water rescue calls	Response and Resilience
	Heightened risk of wildfires and the consequent impact on bio-diversity.	Increased demand for grassland and wildfire incidents, which tend to be protracted incidents	Response and Resilience
	Rising demand for technologies such as wind turbines and electric cars will cause demand for rare earth elements to increase.	Materials of improvements to the estate rise in price. Energy prices rise	Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement
	There are emerging risks of fire in new technology such as mass battery storage sites.	Changes to firefighting tactics	Response and Resilience / People / Customer Engagement and Safety
Technology			
Harnessing artificial intelligence	Increasing numbers of autonomous robots, cars, lorries, boats and aircraft. Artificial intelligence increasingly capable of processing, analysing and making decisions from real world data without human involvement/intervention	Long-term opportunity to remove need to commit firefighters inside buildings to extinguish fires and use technology solutions instead. Remote analysis of incidents and response levels required may be possible	Response and Resilience/ Business Change, Information and Technology, Commercial and Procurement
	Artificial intelligence could provide first responders with a better understanding of community dynamics. Major incident commanders could use artificial	Improvements to simulations and virtual reality capability to be more realistic.	Business Change, Information and Technology / People

	intelligence systems to improve situational awareness and better visualise potential strategies and tactics		
Technological change and convergence	Connectivity, processing power and the volume and variety of data grows exponentially to 2040, with 'next generation' technologies (Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, biotechnology and Quantum technologies)	Better and more seamless integration of data held and data shared between partners. Changes to data protection law post EU Exit would need to be responded to.	Business Change, Information and Technology
	A rise in sophisticated and personally targeted misinformation and fake news	Our brand may potentially be damaged by a targeted attack using our name	Customer Engagement and Safety
	The Covid crisis highlighted the Digital Divide with many households unable to access digital information (e.g. for home schooling). Access to high speed internet becomes an inclusion issue.	We cannot really entirely on technology channels to ensure equality of access	Customer Engagement and Safety
	Technology based solutions develop to tackle social isolation such as chatbots, virtual reality, carer robots and social media to provide both real and virtual companionship. People hanker after real human contact still, but opportunities become more limited	Developments to our digital platform to facilitate remote home safety advice provision in a virtual face to face way	Business Change, Information and Technology Customer Engagement and Safety
	Diesel power phased out by 2030 for new purchases, leading to the development of alternatively powered vehicles for emergency services. Consideration of replacement of fixed and moveable diesel generators.	Large changes to the fleet and fixed generator capabilities	Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement
	Carbon and heat capture schemes become more affordable and prevalent	Ongoing investment in green schemes in line with the Carbon Action Plan	Assets and Environmental Improvement
Political			
Political landscape	A move towards elected mayors and different forms of local government, creating uncertainty and change	A potential change of governance model within the foreseeable future	
	New legislation relating to the built environment, a new equality act, and changes to data protection legislation in a post EU Exit environment	Requirements to update our framework of policies	Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement

	A potential decline as technology changes over 10 to 20 years in traditional core activity for fire and rescue services (fires and road traffic collisions)	A policy shift towards transforming to a community support agency covering life threatening emergencies, flooding, medical support, logistics, and a regular community visit programme to the most vulnerable whilst maintaining high quality emergency response	Response and Resilience / Customer Engagement and Safety
	National negotiating machinery for pay and conditions of service for firefighters are likely to be reformed.	A period of disruption for the workforce	Response and Resilience / People
	Grant funding from government may change. Some functions we provide are grant funded	We may need to look to absorb the cost of grant funded services into our day to day budget	Medium Term Financial Plan
Economic Transitions	The UK faces a prolonged period of weak economic growth and strained public finances. Post-Brexit economic realignment could take several years.	Continued pressure to deliver value for money	Medium Term Financial Plan / all strategies
	Access to markets, labour, suppliers and parts for servicing becomes more expensive in the short term, with no clarity on the long term impacts.	Cyclical and programmed maintenance costs increase	Commercial and Procurement / Assets and Environmental Improvement
	The ability to raise tax from a diminishing working age population becomes harder. Conversely, the council tax base may rise with more single person households	The need to model a range of financial scenarios	Medium Term Financial Plan
	Pressure on pension funds, especially in unfunded schemes, becomes increasingly unsustainable	A period of disruption for the workforce	Response and Resilience / People
	A period of increasing inflation into the mid 2020s, forecast to peak in 2023 at c. 12%	Continued pressure to deliver value for money	Medium Term Financial Plan / all strategies

By: Director Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 13 October 2022

Subject: FINANCIAL UPDATE FOR 2022/23

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report is the first full detailed budget monitoring report for the 2022/23 financial year. It provides an update on a range of financial issues and includes a proposal to bring in-house the vehicle servicing and maintenance function which is currently provided by an external supplier and a request to increase the budget allocation for the proposed redevelopment at Ashford.

Whilst the budget was agreed by the Authority in February 2022, a number of factors have changed significantly since that time, not least the unexpected inflationary spiral seen on prices across the board, alongside pressures on the delivery of supplies and services. This report provides the detail in relation to the current assumptions around the forecast outturn position for the year, based on a number of factors. However, as we have seen in previous years, much can change over the last six months of the year, so very close monitoring of all budgets will continue to take place.

Currently, for the first time in many years, an overspend is forecast against the revenue budget. The current forecast overspend is £733k, but a number of mitigating factors could materialise which may significantly alter the final outturn.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Agree 'in principle' to fund any resulting overspend from reducing the revenue contributions to capital (paragraph 13 refers).
2. Agree to allocate a further £1.2m to fund the cost of the redevelopment of Ashford Fire Station and the new Live Fire Training facility (paragraph 18 refers).
3. Agree to bring in-house the heavy fleet and vehicle servicing and maintenance function (paragraph 23 refers).

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

4. Agree to the proposed lease arrangement for the premises currently used by Commercial Services Group, as part of the in-house arrangements of the fleet servicing and maintenance function (paragraph 23 refers).
5. Consider and note the content of the report.

COMMENTS

Revenue and Capital Budgets

1. **Revenue Budget** - Members will be aware that the revenue budget for the current financial year, (£77.429m) was agreed by the Authority at its February meeting. Since then, it has been necessary to action some adjustments to the budget in the form of virements. These budget adjustments invariably relate to adjustments between revenue budgets and earmarked reserves, for example reflecting identified slippage between financial years, (often due to supplier related issues) but they do not change the overall net revenue budget for 2022/23. Details of all budget changes are shown in **Appendices 1 and 2** (subjective analysis, by type of expenditure) and **Appendices 3 and 4** (functional analysis, by service area).
2. **Revenue Summary position** - Members will be aware that each and every year, budgets are closely monitored to ensure we not only utilise resources in an effective manner, to deliver our frontline services to the people of Kent and Medway, but also so we can reasonably project spend for the year. This has for many years delivered relatively small underspends of between 0.5% and 3% of the net revenue budget. This year is no different in terms of the regular monitoring that we undertake. However, what we are seeing this year is unprecedented inflationary increases in many areas, but also exceptional weather conditions, which has had the knock-on effect of increasing firefighter activity over the summer months, for example the regular and protracted wildfires. The impact of these adverse changes is understandably resulting in increased levels of spend, despite making fairly healthy assumptions for price increases when the budget was set back in February. Current indications are that this could result in an overspend, for the first time in many years, against the net revenue budget, of some £733k. This reflects a forecast net overspend of £468k on pay-related budget headings and a further net overspend of £265k against non-pay budgets. The paragraphs that follow set out the potential impacts in more detail, with explanations for the forecast variances in **appendices 5 – 8**.
3. **Energy Prices** - When the budget was agreed in February it included an inflationary uplift of 46% on gas and electricity budgets, based on information available at the time, increasing the budgets from £419k in 2021/22 (outturn £482k) to £611k for 2022/23. However, the current forecast outturn for 2022/23 is £832k (some £221k in-excess of the budget), but a severe winter could see spend on utilities increase still further. Continued work with our energy provider will hopefully enable us to gain more detailed information from smart meters, which in-turn will help with more accurate forecasts.
4. However, in September 2022 the Government announced the Energy Price Guarantee for families and businesses, which will provide equivalent support to public sector organisations (including Fire and Rescue Authorities) for 6 months. This newly announced scheme will likely have some impact on the current

forecast and the Government also confirmed that a review will be undertaken after 3 months to consider where ongoing focused support for vulnerable industries should be targeted. As yet, we are unsure of the amount of this support, nor when it will be received and in what form, but it should help offset some of the forecast overspend on utilities. However, for now we have adopted a prudent approach and reflected the full amount of the forecast overspend against these budgets, within the forecast net overspend of £733k. Although, Members should be aware that the Authority's costs are likely to increase again once the initial six-month scheme has come to an end.

5. **Inflation** - Although the 2022/23 revenue budget included a more significant uplift for inflation than in previous financial years, inflation has clearly risen to much higher levels than anticipated at that time. The budget for 2022/23 includes general increases of between 5% and 6% where an inflationary uplift was required and higher percentage uplifts in other areas, such as utilities. Recently, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) had risen to 9.9% in the 12 months to August 2022 (slightly down from 10.1% in July). The Bank of England has forecast that inflation, as measured by CPI, is expected to rise to just over 13% in October 2022 and to remain at very elevated levels throughout 2023, before falling to the 2% target two years ahead. Inflationary related cost pressures currently included within the forecast outturn amount to around £300k, but with inflation forecast to continue to rise it is possible that this pressure may increase still further before the end of the financial year.
6. **Pay Awards** - The 2022/23 nationally determined pay awards have not yet been agreed. An offer of 2% has been rejected by the employee's side of the NJC for operational colleagues whilst unions are consulting on whether to 'accept' or 'reject' the offer of a flat increase of £1,925 on all pay points (averages a 5.8% increase) for corporate colleagues. An estimated increase of 3% has been included within the 2022/23 budget for all pay groups so the forecast currently reflects this estimate. The annual cost of a 1% increase amounts to some £650k (£465k for operational colleagues; £185k for corporate colleagues and corporate management team).
7. **Operational Demand** - Members may be aware that the service saw unprecedented levels of operational demand over the summer months, mainly due to the extreme weather conditions. There were more incidents than would normally be anticipated over this period and many of those incidents, due to their nature, required longer attendance for fire crews which has resulted in a forecast overspend against operational activity payments. In addition, many of the incidents attended during this period were grassland fires which, due to high levels of dust and the general surrounding environment, has meant that some vehicles have required additional maintenance to be undertaken increasing costs in this area too.
8. **Vehicle Related Costs** - A number of pressures have been highlighted within this area of activity, which are currently resulting in a forecast overspend of some

£809k. Firstly, there is a forecast overspend of £205k in relation to vehicle fuel where prices had increased to much higher levels than initially anticipated and usage has been higher due to attendance at an increased number of incidents for a longer period of time over the summer months. Although fuel prices have subsequently reduced slightly since they hit their peak in June, it is possible that prices could change again before the end of the year. Secondly, there is currently a significant overspend forecast on vehicle servicing and maintenance costs. This is down to several factors, including a significant increase in the cost of replacement parts, additional unplanned maintenance due to higher usage of the heavy fleet over the summer months, and additional unplanned maintenance on response cars, due to extended delays in the supply of new fleet vehicles.

9. **Investment Returns** - Given the increase in the base rate since the start of the financial year, this is resulting in far better returns on deposits than originally anticipated. Within the forecast outturn, interest receipts are expected to increase by £330k against the base budget. However, although the current forecast for interest receipts has been increased by £330k, this is a prudent estimate, and as such given the market expectations that base rates could continue to rise to around the 4.5% level over the next 12-18 months, it is highly possible that investment returns will generate returns well beyond the current forecast. In addition, if there is any further slippage of infrastructure spend during the year this will result in higher balances, which will also mean higher returns than currently forecast.

Budget Volatility and Risks

10. Each year as part of this budget report, we identify a number of potential risks that could affect the forecast outturn. Paragraphs 3 to 9 above set out pertinent risks that are a significant risk this year, in that we know they are already affecting expenditure levels. However, there are clearly other risks and volatilities that could arise in the latter half of the year, which are set out below for Members consideration.
 - a) **Operational Pay** - The level of whole-time operational overtime is dependent on several factors, for example incident levels in terms of frequency and duration, sickness cover and the use of bank shifts. A variation to the estimates used when generating the current forecast will impact on the final outturn. On-call payments are also difficult to predict as a large proportion of costs relate to incident levels that can vary from year to year.
 - b) **Corporate Staff Pay** - An assumption has been made regarding start dates against vacant posts, however the actual position may differ to the assumptions made and will therefore have an impact on the final outturn. Similarly, if a post becomes vacant and recruitment is delayed or an efficiency is taken by deleting the post from the establishment, then some underspends may arise during the year.

- c) **Pay Awards** - Pay awards for all staff groups are agreed nationally, so an assumption has been made within the budget provision that all staff groups will receive a pay award of 3% for 2022/23. Although pay awards have been offered by the employers' side of the relevant negotiating bodies, these offers have not currently been accepted. If the final pay awards settle at higher than the 3% that has been budgeted there may be a requirement to draw funds down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to fund the additional costs. The full year cost of a 1% pay award equates to around £650k (£465k for operational colleagues; £185k for corporate colleagues and corporate management team).
- d) **Insurance Claims and Legal Costs** - Costs in these areas can be volatile as they are dependent on the level of insurance claims and the number of prosecutions for non-compliance with fire safety standards in the year. If costs incurred during the year are higher than the allocated base budgets, there may be a requirement to draw funds down from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to fund the additional costs.
- e) **Vehicle Servicing and Maintenance** - As well as the delays in the delivery of new vehicles meaning current vehicles are older and now requiring more servicing and maintenance, there have been increases to the cost of component parts and additional maintenance requirements due to the increased use of the heavy fleet over the summer months. This has all impacted on the current forecast position but as we progress through the year it is likely that this position may still change further.
- f) **Cost Increases and Inflation** - In addition to the most recent Bank of England forecasts for inflation, Capital Economics issued their latest forecasts on 14 September, predicting that CPI would peak at 11% in November 2022 and RPI at 14.2% in January 2023, which clearly differs from the Bank of England forecast explained in paragraph 5 above. It is clear from the two independent forecasts that significantly elevated levels of inflation are predicted for at least the remainder of the financial year. Fuel prices have reduced since they peaked in June, but the Authority is still facing a 35% increase in costs this year with the possibility that fuel prices could change again before the end of the financial year. The Government's recent announcement on the Energy Price Guarantee for families and businesses applies to Fire and Rescue Authorities so the support provided should curtail some of the previously anticipated price hikes in this area.
- g) **Slippage of Planned Spend** - Although a proportion of infrastructure spend has already been slipped to 2023/24, it is possible that further supply chain issues may arise during the year and there may also be delays in other areas of planned work meaning that additional expenditure is slipped to 2023/24 later in the year.

11. **Funding a Potential Overspend** - This report clearly sets out that based on current information, there is a likelihood that there will be an overspend against the net revenue budget at the end of the financial year. However, this is an unprecedented year, and as such many things could change in the latter half of the year; inflation predications may not materialise as expected, pay award outcomes could differ to those planned for, extreme weather conditions could impact on the cost of services, the supply of goods and services may be affected to a greater extent and supplier provision may be more difficult. Additionally, the extent of the utility grant is currently unknown at this stage and investment receipts could be better than expected. All of these factors will clearly impact on the final spend for the year.
12. However, Members may recall that, as detailed in the Reserves Strategy 2022/23, one of the purposes of establishing an Insurance and Resource Reserve is to provide a resource to fund unexpected one-off costs that may arise in-year, such as higher than budgeted pay awards, or significant increases in inflation. The opening balance of this reserve was £4.3m and Members did agree at the July Authority meeting, to draw down from this reserve should the need arise. At this stage the forecast outturn does not reflect any draw down to meet inflationary pressures, other than the £40k for the increased cost of smoke alarms, previously reported to Members in July. This is something that may need to be considered later in the year, if the inflationary increases cannot be met from the existing resources set aside in the revenue budget.
13. This report also identifies additional spend which is not inflation driven, such as the significant increase in vehicle maintenance and the unprecedented levels of operational demand over the summer months (see paragraph 7). Some of these cost pressures are partly offset by forecast underspends in other areas, for example investment income (+£330k), mainly due to increases in the bank rate but also as a result of higher than anticipated balances due to the slippage of planned infrastructure expenditure. Every attempt will be made to try and contain spend within the existing budget, but pressures are such that this may not be possible, therefore in the event that the final outturn for the year is an overspend (after offsetting the inflationary impacts against the designated reserve) Members are asked to agree in principle to fund this overspend by reducing the revenue contribution to capital, for which there is a base budget of £2.592m.
14. **Infrastructure Plan and Capital Budgets** - The Infrastructure Plan contains all planned capital expenditure and some large one-off revenue expenditure, such as investment in IT projects. Since the last report to Members in July the capital budget has been reduced by a further £1.846m, to £6.906m. The majority of this budget reduction (£1.66m) relates to delays in the pre-construction contract for the Ashford Fire Station redevelopment resulting in funding being slipped to 2023/24. Other budgets for premises related works (£132k) and vehicle purchases (£125k) have also now slipped to 2023/24. This is partly offset by an

increase of £71k in the budget allocated for the replacement of response vehicles due to an increase in costs.

15. **Ashford Fire Station and Live Fire Training Facility** - Members will be aware that work continues on the redevelopment of the live fire training facility at Ashford. Key deliverables include the provision of a carbonaceous live fire, multi storey training facility that offers a comprehensive fire, rescue and road traffic accident training solution. Training opportunities will range from initial acquisition to ongoing skills refresh and development to meet the National Operational Guidance (NOG) requirements and future proof our training delivery programme. This re-development addresses the constraints of the ageing assets at both Maidstone and Ashford (with Maidstone at end-of-life and Ashford nearing end of life), and importantly it provides a robust training solution for our firefighters in a safe, live fire environment, which in turn enables those earned live fire training skills to be deployed effectively and confidently in real life, which will help to ensure the safety of customers and their property. The re-development will take account of the lessons learned from the Grenfell Towers disaster. The new facility will include the ability to train in high-rise firefighting scenarios, and tactical firefighting in commercial, residential and industrial premises. There will also be a re-modelling of the internal fabric of Ashford fire station, to improve the working conditions for our firefighters, to introduce dirty transitional and clean pathways and the management of contaminants. There will also be a new welfare building to supplement the on-site learning provision and provide welfare amenities to trainees.
16. Whilst other live fire training facilities exist in other FRSs and in the private sector, there is insufficient, guaranteed capacity available to the Authority to fully meet all or at times any, of its training requirements
17. Owing to capacity issues at Ashford Borough Council, the process of achieving planning permission has been delayed and is now placed on the Planning Committee agenda for consideration at the end of October 2022.
18. As time has progressed since the last update to Members and as discussed elsewhere on this agenda, inflation and commodities prices have increased. The anticipated cost of this project is now more likely to be at the upper end of the scale that Members noted in February 2022 of £10m-13m, with an allocation of £11.8m already made in the Capital Strategy approved by Members in Feb 2022. In light of this Members are asked to approve an additional allocation of £1.2m to increase the overall budget for this project to £13m. As with all major projects of this nature there is an element of contingency funding built into the cost assumptions, but every effort will be made to minimise the use of such a contingency and therefore bring the total cost of the project in at less than £13m. Additionally, value engineering has not yet been undertaken, which when completed may present some cost saving opportunities for the build, which could remove some costs from the build.

19. Details of the Infrastructure Plan can be seen at **Appendix 9**. Infrastructure expenditure budgets and budgeted transfers from the infrastructure reserve have been adjusted to reflect the revised forecast outturn for the year.
20. **Capital Receipts and Other Usable Reserves** - The opening balance of the capital receipts reserve, on 1 April 2022, was £9.47m. Several unoccupied Day Crewed houses and the surplus land at Westwood Cross are planned for auction in September 2022 so with the planned use of £6.9m to part-fund capital expenditure in 2022/23 the closing balance is currently forecast to be £4.542m at the end of the financial year.
21. **Reserve Balances** - The Authority maintains a general reserve balance, representing approximately 5% (£3.967m) of the base revenue budget and a small number of Earmarked reserves, although by far the largest is the Infrastructure Reserve (opening balance at 1 April 2022 of £27.87m), which funds a significant proportion of the capital and revenue spend on Infrastructure assets. Details and forecast closing balances on these reserves are attached at **Appendix 10** although this position does not reflect any additional drawdown from reserves that may be required to balance the revenue budget at year-end (as per paragraph 12 above).

Other Financial Issues

22. **Vehicle Servicing and Maintenance Function** - The Authority has for a number of years been receiving vehicle servicing and maintenance for its heavy fleet from Commercial Services Group, a commercial arm of Kent County Council. The current five-year agreement was due to end in March 2022, with options to extend for a further two years. The option to extend for a further year (year 6 of the contract) has been exercised between both parties. However, in June 2022, the Commercial Services Group served notice on the contract with a view to exiting the arrangement at the end of March 2023, at the latest.
23. Due to the business-critical nature of this service, the short time frame before the contract is due to end and the lack of available external options, it is proposed that this function is brought in-house, and as such Members are asked to agree with this proposal. Insourcing this function will initially require the Authority to enter into a five-year lease agreement on the buildings currently occupied by the Commercial Services Group for provision of this function and as such, Members are asked to agree to this lease arrangement. It is proposed that the current workforce will transfer to the Authority under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations (TUPE).
24. Insourcing this function will require an initial outlay in the region of £200k for costs including legal fees, the purchase of equipment from Commercial Services Group, the purchase of new equipment and/or vehicles and IT networking costs. As well as an initial outlay it is expected that the on-going base budget will need to be increased by around £120k from 2023/24 (which will be reflected in the Medium

Term Financial Plan) and budgets will have to be realigned from the vehicle servicing and maintenance heading to other subjective headings, such as salaries and on-costs.

25. **Grants Update** - On 18 July 2022, the Authority accepted the additional protection uplift funding (£406k) offered by the Home Office for 2022/23 to further bolster improvements within fire protection and to help address risks within the built environment.
26. **Insurance Update** - In July Members were notified that the Authority's main insurers, Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC), had provided notification that the company who supply FRIC with claims handling and management services, had been placed into Administration by the High Court. On 4 August, FRIC confirmed that the management services contract and existing service team would be transferred to a new provider, Thomas Miller.

Firefighters Pension Fund 2022/23

27. **The Firefighters' Pension Fund for 2022/23** - Attached at **Appendix 11** is the forecast outturn for the Firefighters' Pension Fund for 2022/23. Firefighter pension costs that are related to injury whilst on duty are met by the Authority, whereas the majority of other firefighter pension costs are funded by the Government. Whilst the Authority is responsible for paying all pensions and collecting all contributions, the resultant net deficit is funded by top-up grant which is paid by the Government in July each year. The forecast for the top-up grant requirement for 2022/23 has increased by £1.1m since the previous forecast submitted to the Home Office in September 2021, mainly due to the assumption that slightly more retirements will now be expected to fall in this financial year than initially anticipated.

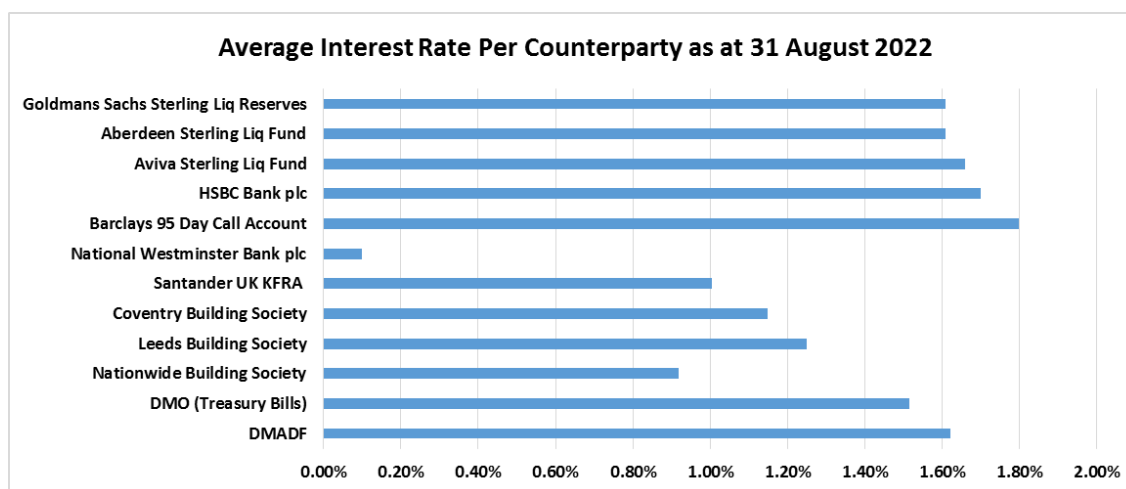
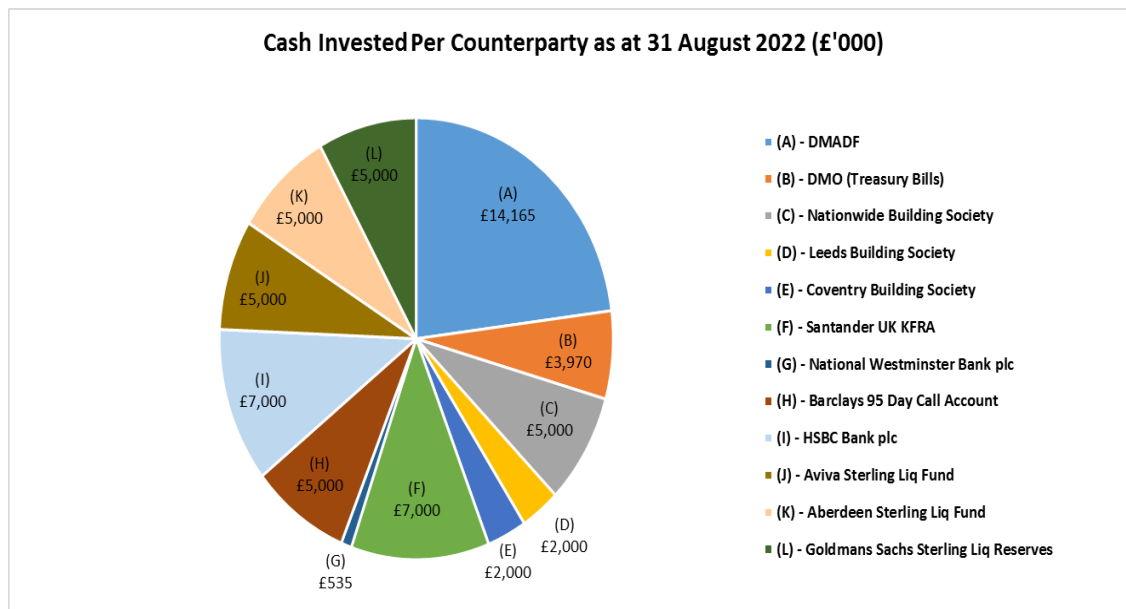
Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27

28. **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023-27 Development** - The recent change of Prime Minister will have implications for fiscal policy, public sector funding, and tax-setting – all of which ultimately affect local government funding. In the short-term, Government Ministers had previously announced that the next financial settlement for local government would be a two-year funding settlement but with the change in Ministers it is currently unclear whether this will still apply. In the medium-term, any big changes anticipated from the local government funding reforms are now unlikely to happen until at least 2025-26. A presentation will be given to Members, later on this agenda, in relation to our early thoughts on assumptions and proposals for the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2023 – 2027.

Cash Invested and Average Interest Rates per Counterparty 2022/23

29. **Cash Invested** - Between April 2022 and August 2022 the Authority invested an average cash balance of £50.7m. The pie chart below shows the balance invested as at 31 August 2022 (£61.67m) which has a forecast investment income

for the year of £522k. The bar chart details current interest rate levels paid on these deposits. A mid-year treasury update is provided later on this agenda.



IMPACT ASSESSMENT

30. This is a challenging year and as such there is every possibility that the revenue budget may overspend. However, the report sets out a number of mitigating options that may arise alongside a recommendation to resource any excess inflationary costs and an in-principle proposal to meet any remaining expenditure which exceeds the existing base budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

31. Members are requested to:
- 31.1 Agree 'in principle' to fund any resulting overspend from reducing the revenue contributions to capital (paragraph 13 refers);

- 31.2 Agree to allocate a further £1.2m to fund the cost of the redevelopment of Ashford Fire Station and the new Live Fire Training facility (paragraph 18 refers);
- 31.3 Agree to bring in-house the heavy fleet and vehicle servicing and maintenance function (paragraph 23 refers);
- 31.4 Agree to the proposed lease arrangement for the premises currently used by Commercial Services Group, as part of the in-house arrangements of the fleet servicing and maintenance function (paragraph 23 refers);
- 31.5 Consider and note the content of the report.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Revenue Budget Adjustments – Subjective Analysis

	Original Budget £'000	Budget Changes £'000	Revised Budget £'000
Figures shown are in £'000			
Salaries, allowances and on-costs	66,367	257	66,624
Training expenses	634	10	644
Other employee costs (incl. insurance)	730	0	730
Direct pension costs	2,080	0	2,080
Total Employee Costs	69,811	267	70,078
Repairs, maintenance & other costs	3,008	872	3,880
Utility costs	2,273	0	2,273
Total Premises Costs	5,281	872	6,153
Vehicle running costs	2,234	39	2,273
Travel allowances and expenses	53	-14	39
Total Transport Costs	2,287	25	2,312
Equipment and supplies	3,094	-192	2,902
Fees and services	1,148	66	1,214
Communications and computing	6,692	-385	6,307
Other supplies and services	569	51	620
Total Supplies and Services	11,503	-460	11,043
Capital financing costs	873	0	873
Revenue contributions to Capital	6,291	-6,285	6
Total Capital Financing	7,164	-6,285	879
Grants and contributions	-7,716	100	-7,616
Investment income	-192	0	-192
Other income	-240	0	-240
Transfers from reserves	-10,469	5,481	-4,988
Total Income	-18,617	5,581	-13,036
Net Budget	77,429	0	77,429

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Revenue Budget Adjustments - Subjective Analysis Explanations

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

- a) **Salaries, allowances and on-costs (£257k increase)** - Several temporary posts have now been confirmed for 2022/23 mainly within the People (£145k) and Customer Safety (£170k) teams. These increases are partly offset by a reduction of £58k where a temporary post within the Building Safety team has finished earlier than initially anticipated. These budget changes are offset by an increased transfer from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve.
- b) **Premises Repairs, maintenance and other costs (£872k increase)** - This budget increase relates to premises infrastructure works (mainly accommodation changes) that have slipped from 2021/22 to 2022/23. This budget increase is therefore offset by a budgeted transfer from the Infrastructure Reserve.
- c) **Equipment and supplies (£192k decrease)** - This budget has been reduced by £519k due to slippage on infrastructure spend where issues sourcing components have resulted in delays in procuring some operational equipment and so expenditure is now not expected to be incurred until 2023/24. This is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve. In addition, the budget has been increased by £257k where non-infrastructure spend on operational equipment has slipped from 2021/22 to 2022/23. This is offset by a transfer from the Rolling Budget Reserve. As reported to Members in April, this budget has also been increased by £40k due to a significant increase in the cost of smoke alarms, and this has been offset by a transfer from the Insurance and Resource Reserve. Other minor budget re-alignments total a net increase of £30k against this heading.
- d) **Fees and Services (£66k increase)** - This budget has been increased by £63k where funding in relation to the Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) memberships was rolled from 2021/22 to 2022/23 so is offset by a transfer from the Rolling Budget Reserve. Other minor budget re-alignments total a net increase of £3k against this heading.
- e) **Communications and computing (£385k decrease)** - Delays in the expected delivery of the Command Support Unit vehicles has resulted in a reduction of £450k against this budget heading where the correlating IT spend has also now been slipped to 2023/24. A further £200k reduction relates to the replacement of the fleet management system, which has also slipped to 2023/24, pending

definition of the requirements. In addition, this budget has been increased by £184k where expenditure on the Time and Attendance system project has slipped from 2021/22 to 2022/23. These budget changes are offset by a transfer to/from the Infrastructure Reserve. Other minor budget re-alignments total a net increase of £81k against this heading.

- f) Other supplies and services (£51k Increase)** - Unspent contributions towards the Kent Resilience Team and Kent Community Safety Partnership have been rolled forward from 2021/22 to 2022/23 so this budget increase is offset by a transfer from the Rolling Budget Reserve.
- g) Revenue contributions to capital (£6.285m decrease)** - The reduction in the capital budget has meant that less revenue contributions are required to part-fund capital expenditure in 2022/23. This is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve.
- h) Grants and contributions (£100k decrease in income)** - Grant claims against the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) project are now expected to be lower than originally anticipated due to slippage on this national project.
- i) Transfers from reserves (£5.481m decrease)** - The majority of this decrease is explained by changes in revenue contributions to capital (g) and other significant reserve adjustments detailed above.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Revenue Budget Adjustments – Functional Analysis

Figures shown are in £'000	Original Budget £'000	Budget Changes £'000	Revised Budget £'000
Firefighting and Rescue Services	32,585	16	32,601
Control	2,078	0	2,078
Operational Policy and Resilience	10,024	-513	9,511
Fleet and Transport	3,044	1	3,045
Total Operational Response and Resilience	47,731	-496	47,235
Customer Safety	2,685	252	2,937
Business Safety	3,227	-58	3,169
Customer Engagement	854	28	882
Total Customer, Business Safety and Engagement	6,766	222	6,988
Corporate Management and Business Support Team	2,167	-38	2,129
Member Allowances and Expenses	78	0	78
People and Learning	3,153	132	3,285
Business Change and Information Technology	8,662	-332	8,330
Property, Environment and Facilities	6,109	794	6,903
Finance, Insurance and Procurement	2,402	-8	2,394
Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance	824	0	824
Total Corporate Teams	23,395	548	23,943
Pension Cost	2,080	0	2,080
Net Financing Costs	681	0	681
Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves	-1,576	-274	-1,850
Non-Ring Fenced Grants	-1,762	0	-1,762
Admin for Council Tax Support	114	0	114
Total Pensions, Financing and Other Costs	-463	-274	-737
Net Budget	77,429	0	77,429

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Revenue Budget Adjustments – Functional Analysis Explanations

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

Reportable virements are detailed below;

- j) Operational Policy and Resilience (£513k decrease)** - See (c) in relation to the slippage of the purchase of operational equipment from 2022/23 to 2023/24 (£508k). Other minor re-alignments to this budget heading total a net reduction of £5k.
- k) Customer Safety (£252k increase)** - See (a) in relation to the temporary posts (£170k) and (c) in relation to the increased cost of smoke alarms (£40k). Other minor re-alignments to this budget heading total a net increase of £42k.
- l) Business Safety (£58k decrease)** - See (a) in relation to the deletion of a temporary post within this team.
- m) People and Learning (£132k increase)** - See (a) in relation to the temporary posts within this team (£144k). Other minor re-alignments to this budget heading total a net reduction of £12k.
- n) Business Change and Information Technology (£332k decrease)** - See (e) (£384k) and (h) (£100k). Other minor re-alignments to this budget heading total a net reduction of £48k.
- o) Property, Environment and Facilities (£794k increase)** - See (b) (£872k). Other minor re-alignments to this budget heading total a net reduction of £78k.
- p) Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves (£274k increase)** - See (a) in relation to temporary posts funded by the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve (£257k). Other minor re-alignments to this budget heading total a net increase of £17k.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Revenue Budget – Subjective Analysis

	Revised Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
Figures shown are in £'000			
Salaries, allowances and on-costs	66,624	67,091	467
Training expenses	644	606	-38
Other employee costs (incl. insurance)	730	725	-5
Direct pension costs	2,080	2,080	0
Total Employee Costs	70,078	70,502	424
Repairs, maintenance & other costs	3,880	3,850	-30
Utility costs	2,273	2,469	196
Total Premises Costs	6,153	6,319	166
Vehicle running costs	2,273	3,082	809
Travel allowances and expenses	39	60	21
Total Transport Costs	2,312	3,142	830
Equipment and supplies	2,902	2,917	15
Fees and services	1,214	1,396	182
Communications and computing	6,307	6,403	96
Other supplies and services	620	620	0
Total Supplies and Services	11,043	11,336	293
Capital financing costs	873	873	0
Revenue contributions to Capital	6	6	0
Total Capital Financing	879	879	0
Grants and contributions	-7,616	-7,939	-323
Investment income	-192	-522	-330
Other income	-240	-449	-209
Transfers from reserves	-4,988	-5,106	-118
Total Income	-13,036	-14,016	-980
Net Budget	77,429	78,162	733

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Significant Variances and Movements in the 2022/23 Revenue Budget

Subjective Variance Analysis

The forecast net overspend of £733k is made up of a variety of underspends and overspends, and the reasons for the most significant variances are commented on below:-

Base Budget Variances

- a) **Salaries, allowances and on-costs (£467k overspend)** - Explanations are provided under the relevant functional headings at Appendix 8.
- b) **Utility costs (£196k Overspend)** - See paragraph 3 of the main section of the report. The forecast overspend on gas and electricity (£221k) is partially offset by a forecast underspend of £25k on business rates - as some additional backdated refunds have been received following the review of rateable values last year.
- c) **Vehicle running costs (£809k Overspend)** - This forecast overspend includes £205k in relation to vehicle fuel where prices had increased to much higher levels than initially anticipated and usage has been higher due to attendance at an increased number of incidents for a longer period of time over the summer months. Although fuel prices have subsequently reduced since they hit their peak in June it is possible that prices could change again before the end of the year. In addition, there is currently an overspend forecast on vehicle servicing and maintenance costs. This is down to several factors, including a significant increase in the cost of replacement parts, additional unplanned maintenance due to higher usage of the heavy fleet over the summer months, and additional unplanned maintenance due to further delays in the supply of new vehicles.
- d) **Fees and services (£182k Overspend)** - The Fire Safety Enforcement team are anticipating that an increased number of enforcement cases may be taken to court this year, incurring legal costs of up to £155k. As the number of cases can vary from year-to-year the base budget is set at an appropriate level to smooth the volatility and so the Insurance and Resource Reserve is used to fund any additional in-year budget pressures if required. Other minor forecast net overspends on legal costs total £27k.
- e) **Communications and computing (£96k Overspend)** - This overspend is mainly due to a significant increase in the Home Office charge for Firelink, which is updated annually based on inflation, which was much higher than anticipated when setting the budget.

- f) Grants and contributions (£323k Additional Income)** - The Government has provided an additional protection uplift grant for 2022/23 (£406k). This is partly offset by a 20% reduction in the Home Office grant towards the cost of Firelink, as reported to the Authority in July (£136k reduction in income). Other minor additional income totals £53k.
- g) Investment income (£330k Additional Income)** - The increase in the Bank of England base rate has meant that returns on investments have also benefited from increased rates with Counterparties. In addition, slippage on infrastructure spend has meant that balances are higher than anticipated when the budget was set. Additional income, above this forecast may materialise if rates continue to rise and there is additional slippage on infrastructure spend later in the year.
- h) Other income (£209k Additional Income)** - The majority of this additional income is expected from the sale of a large number of response cars, being sold as their replacements are rolled out across the service.
- i) Transfers from reserves (£118k transfers from Reserves)** – See (d) regarding additional legal cost for Fire Safety enforcement. This is partly offset by other minor net transfers to reserve totalling £37k.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Revenue Budget – Functional Analysis

	Revised Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
Figures shown are in £'000			
Firefighting and Rescue Services	32,601	32,981	380
Control	2,078	1,973	-105
Operational Policy and Resilience	9,511	9,917	406
Fleet and Transport	3,045	3,675	630
Total Operational Response and Resilience	47,235	48,546	1,311
Customer Safety	2,937	2,973	36
Business Safety	3,169	2,923	-246
Customer Engagement	882	880	-2
Total Customer, Business Safety and Engagement	6,988	6,776	-212
Corporate Management and Business Support Team	2,129	2,144	15
Member Allowances and Expenses	78	78	0
People and Learning	3,285	3,146	-139
Business Change and Information Technology	8,330	8,523	193
Property, Environment and Facilities	6,903	7,058	155
Finance, Insurance and Procurement	2,394	2,128	-266
Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance	824	841	17
Total Corporate Teams	23,943	23,918	-25
Pension Cost	2,080	2,080	0
Net Financing Costs	681	351	-330
Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves	-1,850	-1,850	0
Non-Ring Fenced Grants	-1,762	-1,773	-11
Admin for Council Tax Support	114	114	0
Total Pensions, Financing and Other Costs	-737	-1,078	-341
Net Budget	77,429	78,162	733

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Significant Variances and Movements in the 2022/23 Revenue Budget

Functional Variance Analysis

The forecast net overspend of £733k is made up of a variety of underspends and overspends, and the reasons for the most significant variances are commented on below: -

Base Budget Variances

- j) Firefighting and Rescue Services (£380k overspend)** - On-call fire stations are currently running significantly under establishment, meaning staff at wholetime fire stations are, on occasions, providing additional cover where the nearest on-call appliance is off-the-run. The on-call staffing budget is currently forecast to underspend by £766k due to vacancies. Wholetime fire stations are currently running over establishment, mainly due to the uncertainty around the level of retirements that were anticipated following changes to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. In addition, overtime at whole-time fire stations is much higher than initially anticipated, mainly due to unprecedented demand during the summer months meaning there were more incidents of longer duration than would normally be expected. Also, wholetime crews are attending incidents when the nearest on-call pump is not available. The wholetime staffing budget is currently forecast to overspend by £1.146m, mainly for the reasons detailed above.
- k) Control (£105k underspend)** - There are four vacancies in the team which are currently expected to be filled later in the year.
- l) Operational Policy and Resilience (£406k overspend)** - Due to the restructure within the Response and Resilience team there have been several months of handovers and overlaps in some roles, plus additional cover has been required to cover some long-term absences. Additionally, there has been a backlog of training caused by Covid related issues and a higher number of operational calls this year, both of which have had an impact.
- m) Fleet and Transport (£630k overspend)** - See (c) in relation to a forecast overspend of £809k on vehicle servicing and maintenance costs and (h) in relation to forecast additional income of £209k from the sale of vehicles. Other minor net overspends total £30k.
- n) Business Safety (£246k underspend)** - Staffing budgets are due to underspend by £185k due to vacancies within this team. Other minor net underspends total £61k.

- o) People and Learning (£139k underspend)** - Staffing budgets are forecast to underspend by £115k, mainly due to delays in the recruitment of new staff into apprentice roles. Other minor net underspends total £24k.
- p) Business Change and Information Technology (£193k overspend)** - See (e) and (f) in relation to increased Firelink charges and reduced Firelink grant. This is partly offset by a reduction in the cost of Dynamics software licences due to a price reduction and a rephasing of the project.
- q) Property, Environment and Facilities (£155k overspend)** - See (b) in relation to the forecast overspend on utility costs (£196k). This is partly offset by other minor net underspends totalling £41k.
- r) Finance, Insurance and Procurement (£266k underspend)** - Several vacancies, which have now been filled, have resulted in a forecast underspend of £55k. An unbudgeted transfer from the Insurance and Resource Reserve has been forecast to offset the forecast overspend (£155k) against legal costs for Fire Safety enforcement (see (d)). Other minor net underspends total £56k.
- s) Net Financing Costs (£330k underspend)** - See (h) regarding additional investment income.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Infrastructure Budget Adjustments

Figures shown are in £'000

	Original Budget	Budget Changes	Revised Budget
Infrastructure Capital Budget			
Ashford Fire Station Redevelopment	4,360	-1,660	2,700
Control Location	300	0	300
Total Estate Development Programme	4,660	-1,660	3,000
Generators	50	-29	21
Roofing Works	100	592	692
Boilers and Heating Systems	122	-112	10
Total Premises	272	451	723
Mobile Data Terminals	185	142	327
Printers	100	52	152
Total Information and Communication Systems	285	194	479
Appliances	4,708	-4,708	0
Specialist Units and Vehicles	981	-142	839
Cars and Vans	2,285	-420	1,865
Total Vehicles and Equipment	7,974	-5,270	2,704
Total Infrastructure Capital Budget	13,191	-6,285	6,906
Infrastructure Revenue Budget			
Premises	1,343	797	2,140
Operational Equipment	685	-519	166
Information and Comms. Systems	3,439	-338	3,101
Total Infrastructure Revenue Budget	5,467	-60	5,407
Total Infrastructure Revenue and Capital Budgets	18,658	-6,345	12,313
Funded from: -			
Base Revenue Contributions	-3,792	0	-3,792
Infrastructure Reserve	-7,834	6,318	-1,516
One-off funding & grants	-132	27	-105
Capital receipts applied	-6,900	0	-6,900
Total Funding	-18,658	6,345	-12,313

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Infrastructure Budget Adjustments

Capital Budget

- (a) **Ashford Fire Station Redevelopment (£1.660m decrease)** - This budget has been slipped to 2023/24 due to delays in the pre-construction contract.
- (b) **Roofing Works (£592k increase)** - This budget has been increased due to slippage from 2021/22 (£600k) and other minor re-alignments between financial years totalling a net decrease of £8k.
- (c) **Boilers and Heating Systems (£112k decrease)** - Part of this budget (£104k) has been slipped to 2023/24 as the heat pump installations and boiler replacements will not happen this year. Other minor re-alignments between financial year's total a net decrease of £8k.
- (d) **Mobile Data Terminals (£142k increase)** - This budget has been increased due to project slippage from 2021/22.
- (e) **Cars and Vans (£420k decrease)** - This budget has been reduced by £526k due to slippage to 2023/24 for the replacement pool cars (£486k) and the replacement Water Safety training van (£40k) where lead times are longer than anticipated. This is partly offset by an increase of £35k, where spend on replacement pool cars has slipped from 2021/22 and by an increase of £71k due to an increase in costs for the replacement response vehicles.

Revenue Budget

- (f) **Premises (£797k increase)** – See Appendix 2 (b) for an explanation of an increase of £872k. This is partly offset by a reduction in the budget for professional fees (£60k) which has slipped to 2023/24 and expenses in relation to the Control location move (£15k) which has also slipped to 2023/24.
- (g) **Operational Equipment (£519k decrease)** – See Appendix 2 (c) for an explanation of this decrease.
- (h) **Information and Comms Systems (£338k decrease)** – The majority of this change is explained in Appendix 2 (e).

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 General and Earmarked Reserves

Figures shown are in £'000		Opening Balance 01-Apr-22	Forecast Transfer 2022/23	Forecast Closing Balance 31-Mar-23
General Reserve	(A)	3,760	210	3,970
<i>Earmarked Reserves:</i>				
Government Grants	(B)	3,214	-1,977	1,237
Infrastructure	(C)	27,870	-1,526	26,344
Insurance and Resource	(C)	4,316	-622	3,694
Rolling Budgets	(C)	867	-651	216
Service Transformation and Productivity	(C)	1,294	-540	754
Total Earmarked Reserves		37,561	-5,316	32,245
Total Revenue Reserves		41,321	-5,106	36,215
Capital Receipts	(D)	9,470	-5,264	4,206
Total Capital Reserves		9,470	-5,264	4,206
Total Usable Reserves		50,791	-10,370	40,421

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

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2022/23 Firefighters' Pension Fund

Figures shown are in £'000	Home Office Return (Sept 2021)	Home Office Return (Aug 2022)	Total Variance
Pension Outgoings:			
Pension payments	25,275	27,118	1,843
Total Expenditure	25,275	27,118	1,843
Pension Income:			
Employee contributions	3,737	3,988	251
Employer contributions	8,324	8,732	408
In-year ill-health charge income	360	420	60
Non-abated pension income	175	150	-25
Transfer values received	0	49	49
Government top-up grant	12,679	13,779	1,100
Total Income	25,275	27,118	1,843
Net Fund Expenditure	0	0	0

This page has been left blank

By: Director Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 13 October 2022

Subject: DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN
2023 – 2027 PRESENTATION

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

A presentation will be given to Members at the meeting on the Development of the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023 – 2027.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Director, Finance and Corporate Services – Alison Kilpatrick
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext 8262
EMAIL: alison.kilpatrick@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS:

This page has been left blank

By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 13 October 2022

Subject: GOVERNANCE AND POLICY UPDATES

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report covers the following governance issues:

- A.** Performance Assurance Statement (paragraphs 1 to 2 and **Appendix 1** refer).
- B.** Networked Fire Service Control Partnership (paragraphs 3 to 6 refer).
- C.** Legislative update (paragraphs 7 to 15 and **Appendix 2** refer).
- D.** Recently refreshed policies (paragraphs 16 to 18 refer).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the Performance Assurance Statement (paragraph 1 to 2 and **Appendix 1** refer).
2. Approve that the Networked Fire Service Control Partnership becomes the Authority's partner in the event of 999 call volumes in Kent needing to be flowed to another Service for call handling (paragraph 3 to 6 refers).
3. Note the remaining contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: See each section

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL:

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

COMMENTS

A. Performance Assurance Statement

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

1. This report sets out the Authority's compliance with the requirements of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#). In previous years this was considered by the Authority alongside the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). However, because these two documents are written to meet the needs of two entirely different sets of legislative requirements – the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 for the AGS; and the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018 for the Statement of Assurance – it was decided that for this year they would be split into two separate documents. The AGS was considered at the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 22 September 2022.
2. As well as turning the Statement of Assurance into a stand-alone document, one of the other aims was to reduce its length. Last year's was 40 pages long, but for this year it has been reduced to 29 pages. It is attached at **Appendix 1** and Members are requested to approve it.

B. Networked Fire Service Control Partnership

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

3. Further to the update at the Authority meeting in July 2022 which detailed the Authority's continued collaboration with Kent Police at the new joint control facility in cold harbour, this update details the steps taken to further develop and improve the systems we use in fire control and the partnerships we have with other fire and rescue services.
4. Our arrangements with Kent Police have served us well over the last nine years and the continued co-location with Kent Police allows us to continue develop our already close relationship. However, the Authority is the only fire and rescue service in the UK to not have another fire service able to take 999 calls on its behalf should the need arise (Kent Police provide this function currently).
5. In addition, there are a number of fire services in the UK that are working closely together in joint fire service control rooms, partnerships and collaborations. The outcomes from the Grenfell inquiry have clearly shown the importance of fire services continuing to work closely together from a fire command and control perspective.
6. The project team looking at this issue have assessed the existing and emerging partnerships nationwide and have concluded that the best operational benefits can be derived from joining the well-established Networked Fire Service Control Partnership, currently comprising Devon and Somerset, Dorset, Hampshire, and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services. Members of the partnership are aware of the Authority's interest

and discussions have been positive. Members are therefore requested to approve that the Partnership becomes the Authority's partner in the event of 999 call volumes in Kent needing to be flowed to another Service for call handling.

C. Legislative update

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

Procurement

7. Following the UK's exit from the European Union, the Government issued a Green Paper on 15 December 2020 seeking views on changes to how public authorities procured goods and services. Its response to this consultation was published on 6 December 2021, and the subsequent Bill was included in the Queen's speech on 11 May 2022.
8. The Bill is currently at the House of Lords stage and has been the subject of robust debate in that chamber, and this continues at the time of writing. The Government is understood to be aiming for Royal Assent in early 2023 with a view to a six-month transition period.
9. The key features contracting public authorities should expect are:
 - The consolidation and simplification of existing public procurement statutory regimes
 - A simplification of language to improve accessibility and user-friendliness
 - A clear move away from EU derived provisions
 - Increased flexibility of procedures and process – which aims to improve innovation and open up markets to smaller businesses and social enterprises
 - Increased focus on planning of a procurement by contracting authorities
 - Revisions to key procurement principles and objectives
 - One of the key aims to make it easier for contracting authorities to exclude suppliers that present unacceptable risk via a debarment process which will essentially preclude suppliers from being able to bid for public sector work for a period of time
 - Increased emphasis on management of contracts post award
 - An increase in transparency, which includes publication of any variation to a contract over a certain value, and also publication of a minimum of three performance indicators initially at crown level spend.
 - Adherence to existing international agreements e.g., WTO and GPA and EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement
10. The Authority's Commercial and Procurement suite of policies will need to be reviewed and amended in line with the new Bill when it becomes an Act and will be brought to Members at a future meeting.

Data Protection

11. On 23rd June 2022 the Government published its response to the Autumn 2021 consultation ('Data: a new direction') in which it sets out its key proposals for reform of the current data protection regime (founded on the United Kingdom interpretation of the European GDPR conventions, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations). The next step will be the presentation of the Data Reform Bill, which will then be subject to parliamentary scrutiny (dates TBC).
12. The key proposals set out in the response with further details attached at **Appendix 2** to this report for Members' information.
 - Requirement to implement a 'Privacy Management Programme'
 - Removal of Data Protection Officers (DPOs)
 - Removal of Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs)
 - Removal of records of processing activities
 - Adopting the existing provisions on how data breaches are reported to the Information Commissioner into the new Bill
 - Adopting the existing provisions on how Subject Access Requests are to be processed
 - Refreshed guidance on the use of cookies on websites
 - Reform of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) itself
13. The move to diverge from the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the existing Act is motivated by a desire to try to make the UK marginally more attractive to businesses and boost medical/scientific research sectors through making it easier to access and process personal data. However, many companies, organisations and institutions have adopted GDPR as their global default, so there may be little incentive to take advantage of any UK divergence.
14. Moreover, if the UK weakens its data protection law too much, weakens the compliance requirements for small companies, or signs data sharing deals with countries with less strict data protection laws, then the EU will simply look to remove the UK's adequacy status which will have serious implications for European data flows. The adequacy status will lapse in 2025 unless it's specifically renewed.

Other Bills

15. A number of other Bills were announced in the Queen's speech. However, it has recently been announced the legislation introducing a Bill of Rights, replacing the Human Rights Act will be shelved in its present form. It is not known at the time of writing if other Bills will also be withdrawn.

D. Recently Refreshed Policies

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

16. 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
- Health and Wellbeing Policy
 - Death in Service Policy
 - Family Friendly Policy
 - Workforce Planning Policy
 - Capability Policy
 - Modified Duties and Reasonable Adjustment
17. All the adjustments are for readability and simplicity, and to reflect any new guidance from Government.
18. In addition, a review is underway of the Authority's complete suite of 35 privacy notices. This is to ensure that they remain up-to-date and fit-for-purpose. The review is approximately halfway through and will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

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 referenced in 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. 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 Performance Assurance Statement (paragraph 1 to 2 and **Appendix 1** refer).
- 20.2 Approve that the Networked Fire Service Control Partnership becomes the Authority's partner in the event of 999 call volumes in Kent needing to be flowed to another Service for call handling (paragraph 3 to 6 refers).
- 20.3 Note the remaining contents of the report

This page has been left blank

Statement of Assurance 2021/22 for the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Government guidance requires the Authority to undertake a self-assessment of operational performance (known as the Statement of Assurance). [Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) requires the Secretary of State to prepare a [Fire and Rescue National Framework](#) which sets priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in England. FRAs have a statutory duty to have regard to the National Framework. The Statement of Assurance is the assessment of the position of this Authority against the National Framework. The current Fire and Rescue National Framework for England came into effect on 1 June 2018 and is organised around seven sections:

Section 1. Introduction

This section highlights five priorities for all FRAs in England. These are to:

- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents.
- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face.
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Section 2. Delivery of functions

This section deals with risk assessment and countywide resilience, and how the FRA plans to mitigate these risks through either operational response, or prevention activities. The Framework also sets a number of expectations of what an integrated risk management plan (IRMP)¹ should contain.

Section 3. National Resilience

This section requires FRAs to make arrangements to support national resilience, including working across borders and responding to terrorist incidents.

Section 4. Governance

Fire and rescue authorities operate with a range of different locally determined governance arrangements including an individual – either a police, fire and crime commissioner (PFCC) or a mayor – having sole responsibility for being the fire and rescue authority for an area. Each fire and rescue authority has a statutory duty to ensure provision of their core functions as required by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

¹ NB: Within KFRS, the Safety and Wellbeing Plan is a consultation document with the outcomes reflected in the Customer and Corporate Plan. We choose not to use the term 'Integrated Risk Management Plan' because, as a public facing document, we find that Safety and Wellbeing Plan is better understood. The term IRMP itself has been replaced by Community Risk Management Plan.

Section 5. Achieving value for money

This section contains a number of recommendations regarding reserves. It also makes engagement in national procurement schemes mandatory, but only where appropriate. For example, if a national procurement of goods or services has been recently undertaken, FRAs will be expected to use any framework contract that results. If they choose not to, there is an expectation they will need to account for that decision.

Section 6. Workforce

This is a largely new section in the Framework. All FRAs are expected to have a workforce strategy which aligns with the national workforce strategy. Following a consultation early in 2017, the Government has included wording in the draft Framework which limits the practice of re-engaging retired staff at senior levels of the workforce, except in absolutely exceptional circumstances. Enhancing professionalism within the fire sector is noted, applying principles of fitness that account for the physically demanding nature of the role. This section also states the FRAs are to implement the new professional standards published by the Fire Standards Board.

Section 7. Inspection, intervention and accountability

This section sets out the responsibilities on FRAs to cooperate with the inspection process that is delivered by HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services) and requests from the inspectorate for information and data. It also requires FRAs to give due regard to the reports published by HMICFRS. This section restates the powers of intervention into a failing (or at risk of failing) FRA which are available to the Secretary of State under Section 22 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This edition of the framework makes meeting the transparency code relevant to each FRA mandatory (for this Authority this is the Local Government Transparency Code 2015).

The level of assurance for 2021/22

There is no standard measure of assessment for FRAs degree of compliance with the National Framework. Consequently, to be as robust as possible, the Authority employs a level of assessment assessed against a five-tier rating. The criteria that inform this rating are drawn from the definitions in the assurance levels used by Internal Audit – this ensures consistency with the reporting methodology used during these other assessments of the Authority's effectiveness. These are displayed on page 29 of this Statement.

On the basis of our self-assessment of operational performance against the requirements of the National Framework for the 2021/22 financial year has been assessed as **HIGH**. This indicates that arrangements against each of the seven sections are extremely well designed and applied effectively. Processes are robust and well-established, there is a sound system of control operating effectively and consistently applied to achieve service/system objectives and there are examples of best practice. No significant weaknesses have been identified.

Section 1. Introduction

1.1 Powers

Under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (“the 2004 Act”), the Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework. The Framework:

- a) must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;
- b) may contain guidance to fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions; and
- c) may contain any other matter relating to fire and rescue authorities or their functions that the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

1.2 Priorities

The priorities in this Framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:

- make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents;
- identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
- collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide;
- be accountable to communities for the service they provide; and
- develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

How do we meet these requirements and get assurance?

The Authority has a published [Response and Resilience Strategy](#) which is concerned with making sure the right resources are in the right place at the right time.

Our [People Strategy](#) sets out how we aim to improve organisational performance by ensuring that we have a diverse workforce where everyone has the right skills, capabilities and involvement to make life safer for the people of Kent. Delivery of this plan will ensure that the highest standards of leadership and management are in place to sustain a motivated and engaged workforce. We believe this will foster an organisational culture which truly embraces the diversity and individuality of people and the need for inclusiveness. It complements the national workforce strategy for fire and rescue services.

These are two of the six corporate strategies that underpin the [Customer Safety Plan 2021-2031](#). This presents our ideas for what a modern fire and rescue service should do for the public it serves and sets out how we think the world might change in the next ten years or so and the associated risk. It shows how we have used this information to put together our strategies as well as some of the [sources that have informed our thinking](#). Assessing all the foreseeable changes on the horizon that could affect what we are able to deliver to our customers is really important to how we plan our activities.

In terms of fire and rescue related risks, we publish a [risk profile for Kent and Medway](#), which is an analysis of risk within Kent and Medway and how this relates to demand for our services. We have a mature risk assessment process which draws in data from a variety of internal databases and external sources, including the [Kent Community Risk Register](#).

When it comes to collaborating with partners we are a key organisation within the [Kent Resilience Forum \(KRF\)](#). The KRF is a local resilience forum which has been set up to ensure that agencies and organisations plan and work together, to ensure a co-ordinated response to emergencies that could have a significant impact on communities in Kent. It was fundamental to coordinating the response to both the coronavirus pandemic and the UK's departure from the EU.

Partnership working is a key feature of how the Authority operates and we continue to develop strong and lasting working relationships with Kent Police, SECAmb, other fire and rescue services, local authorities, NHS clinical commissioning groups, and many other agencies. The hosting of the Kent Resilience Forum by the Authority and the associated input of our staff into the Forum's covid-19 response and recovery groups has been fundamental to the positive impact of the Forum on the Kent response to the pandemic.

Section 2. Delivery of functions

2.1 Identify and Assess

Every fire and rescue authority must assess all reasonably foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect their communities, whether they are local, cross-border, multi-authority and/or national in nature from fires to terrorist attacks. Regard must be had to Community Risk Registers produced by Local Resilience Forums and any other local risk analyses as appropriate.

Fire and rescue authorities must put in place arrangements to prevent and mitigate these risks, either through adjusting existing provision, effective collaboration and partnership working, or building new capability. Fire and rescue authorities should work through the Strategic Resilience Board where appropriate when determining what arrangements to put in place.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

We publish the [Safety and Wellbeing Plan](#). This is the Authority's public consultation document. The purpose of our Safety and Wellbeing Plan is to inform the public about changes we intend to make, or would like the public's views on, before we make them. Proposals for changes to the Authority are drawn up and consulted upon with staff, members of the public, businesses and community groups. We have also provided a summary of what the public receive for the money they pay in council tax to help run the fire and rescue service across Kent and Medway. Responses to the proposals in the plan are analysed and then [presented to the Fire Authority](#).

Once agreed by Members, the outcomes of the Safety and Wellbeing plan are then fed into the [Customer Safety Plan](#). This sets out our strategies and ideas for what a modern fire and rescue service should do for the public it serves. The plan incorporates the medium-term financial plan and infrastructure programme and also provides details of the Authority's performance over the previous year, targets for the coming years and an improvement action plan explaining how we intend to achieve these targets. As part of this, each Directorate within the Service develops a strategy that sets out how it will meet the objectives in the Customer Safety Plan.

We refresh our corporate strategies every four years, using the analysis of what the future holds, our aim and objectives, and our key themes. The strategies set out our aims over that period and what we would like to achieve in specific areas. The current six corporate strategies are as follows:

1. Response and Resilience
2. Customer Engagement and Safety
3. People
4. Assets and Environmental Improvement
5. Business Change, Information and Technology
6. Commercial and Procurement

We monitor the delivery of each corporate strategy and report updates to the meetings of the [Fire Authority](#). Over and above that, we have a suite of performance indicators which form the basis of a 'balanced scorecard', drawing from all the strategies and other measures we use. This is used to give assurance to all that we are delivering what we promise in this plan.

The Authority maintains a [corporate risk register](#). Twice yearly updates about the corporate risk register are taken to the Authority's Audit and Governance Committee. The corporate risk register is kept under regular review, updated as required and key stakeholders kept informed.

In relation to operational (as opposed to corporate) risk, the Authority undertakes and publishes a [risk profile for Kent and Medway](#) which is an analysis of risk within Kent and Medway and how this relates to demand for the Authority's services. We have a mature risk assessment process which draws in data from a variety of internal databases and external sources, including the [Kent Community Risk Register](#).

2.2 Prevent and Protect

Fire and rescue authorities must make provision for promoting fire safety, including fire prevention, and have a locally determined risk-based inspection programme in place for enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in premises to which it applies.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

Our [Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy](#) sets out our priorities over the next four years in the area of prevention and protection. It outlines how we will help people stay safe in their homes, where they work, on the roads and in places of education. This is one of the six corporate strategies that underpin the Customer Safety Plan.

Over the past five years we have seen a 12% reduction in the number of fires across Kent and Medway. And we've seen fewer people killed on our roads. We aim to continue this trend as we work towards a future where no one is killed or seriously injured by a fire or other emergency. For the first time, we have brought together our protection, prevention, customer experience, collaboration, equality of access to services and engagement work into one strategy. We recognise that each of these areas needs to work closely to be more effective and efficient. In 2020 we reorganised to create a directorate which aligns all of these teams to drive our change agenda.

The Authority has a specialist team of [Safe and Well Officers](#) working across Kent and Medway and recently created an additional team using on-call firefighters to deliver more home safety checks to customers. We deliver approximately 20,000 Safe and Well/Home Fire Safety visits annually, using referrals from other agencies and direct mail to help recruit and target those at most risk.

The Authority established a Customer Experience and Behaviour Change Team which has developed a framework and methodology for embedding behaviour change practices into the Authority's customer and business safety strategies. Also included in this is the ability to evaluate the programme of Safe and Well visits.

We operate a team called the Risk Information Team who are responsible for collating and assessing information from special risk sites and ensuring site specific risk information is consistent, accurate and available to crews. In conjunction with this, the Authority has started to move to one single system to collect, store and share risk information – Microsoft Dynamics. This replaces the three separate Microsoft CRM systems that were previously in use; one each for Building Safety, Customer Safety and Operational Response. Information was not easily or routinely shared amongst these systems or teams and in some instances the same premises or site would be in all three systems.

Dynamics has changed the way the Authority approaches risk information. With this new system a premises will only be added once, all activities are then processed from this one place. For example, if Building Safety issue a prohibition notice for a premises this is then made available to all staff including operational colleagues. Dynamics also stores plans, images and evacuation information, which the Risk Information team collect as part of their inspection, to support crews in planning for and responding to an incident.

2.3 Respond

Fire and rescue authorities must make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies within their area and in other areas in line with their mutual aid agreements. Fire and rescue authorities must have effective business continuity arrangements in place in accordance with their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

Our [Response and Resilience Strategy](#) sets out our aims over the next four years in the area of operational response. It outlines how we will prepare for emergencies and how we will respond to them. This is one of the [six corporate strategies](#) that underpin the [Customer Safety Plan 2021-2031](#).

Business continuity plans (including recovery plans) are in place for all reasonably foreseeable risks to the Authority. Our plans are designed to enable us to respond effectively to emergencies which may affect the delivery of our core functions.

All business continuity plans are regularly validated through exercises (both live and table-top) to ensure they are comprehensive, fit for purpose and realistic. These exercises allow us to test our procedures and responses to a variety of events, ensuring a cohesive response whilst being able to maintain our front line emergency response and Service critical support functions. As part of this the [Emergency Planning and Contingencies Policy](#) was refreshed in February 2022 to ensure that it remains up-to-date. The Authority participates in a national annual exercise on Business Continuity Awareness Week.

As outlined in section 2.2, we operate a team called the Risk Information Team who are responsible for collating and assessing information from special risk sites and ensuring site specific risk information is consistent, accurate and available to crews. The risk data is also shared with partners across borders enhancing risk data awareness for neighbouring services. In conjunction with this, the Authority has moved to one single system called Microsoft Dynamics to collect, store and share risk information across departments and services.

The outbreak of the [coronavirus pandemic](#) led to unprecedented uncertainty, requiring urgent business continuity arrangements to be implemented. The arrangements put in place following the declaration of a major incident in response to the coronavirus pandemic worked extremely well overall, due in large part to the Authority's tried and tested Business Continuity plan. Our effective response to the coronavirus pandemic was identified by [HMICFRS in their covid-19 inspection](#), which showed the response to and systems of control employed by the Authority to be robust and effective, allowing it to adapt to the significant challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

We are committed to learning from the experiences of our customers, partners, and colleagues. We will continue to embed a culture of learning that allows us to deal with new situations and problems. This drives innovation and allows us to become more skilled and experienced. We proactively seek out feedback and use our assurance processes to measure the effectiveness of changes we make. To this end, we play an active role in the [National Operational Learning](#) process and had adopted [National Operational Guidance](#).

The Authority has provided a round-the-clock on-site emergency response capability to Eurotunnel since the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994. The service is provided under a contract with Eurotunnel to provide the first line of response (FLOR) to any rescue emergency inside the Channel Tunnel.

The UK and French FLOR teams regularly work together, undertaking joint binational training on a weekly basis and large scale binational exercises, once a year to test the joint control rooms and procedures within the concession. We also work with our French counterparts to provide the second line of response (SLOR) to any emergency event in the Channel Tunnel and at the concession Emergency sidings within the UK.

In April 2021, a binational multi-agency exercise (Binat 31) was undertaken at the Channel Tunnel to test the communications networks within the running tunnels along with the triangulation of communications from the tunnel to the incident command centre. Although the coronavirus pandemic meant that this needed to be run as a simulated (table-top) exercise.

The Authority has recently signed a new seven year contract with Eurotunnel to deliver FLOR functions. This represents the longest term contract the Authority have had in the 25 years of working with Eurotunnel.

Whilst the ability to undertake any further exercises throughout 2020 and 2021 was curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic, exercises have now resumed and the next binational exercise (Binat 32) took place at the end of April. This tested the communications for command and control, logistics for casualty handling (post-fire) and cross channel working. Debriefs and outcomes were recorded with joint actions for both UK and French sides and published in unison with Eurotunnel.

2.4 Collaboration

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 created a statutory duty on fire and rescue authorities, police forces, and ambulance trusts to:

- keep collaboration opportunities under review;
- notify other emergency services of proposed collaborations that could be in the interests of their mutual efficiency or effectiveness; and
- give effect to a proposed collaboration where the proposed parties agree that it would be in the interests of their efficiency or effectiveness and that it does not have an adverse effect on public safety.

Fire and rescue authorities must collaborate with other fire and rescue authorities to deliver interoperability (between fire and rescue authorities) and interoperability (with other responders such as other emergency services, wider Category 1 and 2 responders and Local Resilience Forums) in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). Fire and rescue authorities must collaborate with the National Resilience Lead Authority to ensure interoperability is maintained for National Resilience assets.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

Collaboration and partnership working is a key feature of how the Authority operates and we continue to develop strong and lasting working relationships with Kent Police, SECamb, other fire and rescue services, local authorities, NHS clinical commissioning groups, and many other agencies. A regular [collaboration update](#) is taken to the meetings of the [Fire Authority](#).

We have a dedicated Collaboration Team to increase efficiency and effectiveness of partnership working. Wherever possible we consider collaboration with our partner organisations, such as Kent Police and SECamb and progress any other possible collaboration opportunities that may present themselves to enable greater efficiencies and improvements to the service.

We are key organisation within the [Kent Resilience Forum \(KRF\)](#). The KRF is a local resilience forum which has been set up to ensure that agencies and organisations plan and work together, to ensure a co-ordinated response to emergencies that could have a significant impact on communities in Kent. It was fundamental to coordinating the response to both the coronavirus pandemic and the UK's departure from the EU.

The Authority also hosts and manages the Kent Resilience Team (KRT). Part of the KRF, the KRT is a multi-agency initiative to transform the delivery of emergency planning services in order to achieve better outcomes for the people of Kent. It does so by improving the effectiveness of the planning, response and recovery from emergencies.

To ensure we develop better inter-agency working and to help save public money, we have proactively opened up our premises for use by other agencies, particularly SECamb and Kent Police. SECamb mobilise resources from a number of KFRS owned premises and we support them by responding to life-threatening medical emergencies when our crews or officers are available to do so.

We are part of the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme \(JESIP\)](#) with Kent Police and SECamb. The JESIP programme sets out a standard approach at incidents to multi-agency working between emergency services and other response organisations.

We operate a shared 999 control room with Kent Police. Working in partnership with Kent Police, we implemented the UK's first inter-agency command and control solution.

In addition, mutual aid and cross-border working agreements, under Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 have been signed with all neighbouring fire and rescue authorities and we undertake familiarization training with them.

We actively consider opportunities for collaboration with other services and ensure arrangements are in place to effectively evaluate opportunities and to review and monitor collaboration activities to ensure continued benefits and cost-effectiveness. The Authority has been at the forefront of collaboration and leads the fire service national collaboration project for procurement.

Section 3. National Resilience

3.1 Gap Analysis

Fire and rescue authorities' risk assessments must include an analysis of any gaps between their existing capability and that needed to ensure national resilience. Fire and rescue authorities are required to assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning. To do this effectively, fire and rescue authorities are expected to assess their existing capability and identify any gaps as part of the integrated risk management planning process.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

The Authority publishes a [risk profile for Kent and Medway](#) which is an analysis of risk within the county and how this relates to demand for the Authority's services. We have a mature risk assessment process which draws in data from a variety of internal databases and external sources, including the [Kent Community Risk Register](#).

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, partner agencies in the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) are required to assess the risks in their area. KRF partners achieve this by working together to develop the 'Kent Community Risk Register'. The risk register is informed by national guidance and developed locally with partners and subject matter experts to list hazards and threats identified by government departments and local agencies. Prior to approval the risk register is then endorsed by the strategic representatives of all KRF partners.

We are a key organisation within the [Kent Resilience Forum](#). The KRF is a local resilience forum, one of a number across England, which has been set up to ensure that agencies and organisations plan and work together, to ensure a co-ordinated response to emergencies that could have a significant impact on communities in Kent.

The Authority also works with partners in the South East and nationally on a number of projects to support national resilience. Issues regarding this are reported to Members, but it should be recognised that due to the sensitive nature of this area, limited information is detailed in the public domain.

Exercises are undertaken with the Authority's counterparts in France, Belgium and Holland. However, as mentioned in section 2.3, the coronavirus pandemic meant the annual joint UK-French exercise in the Channel Tunnel for 2021 (Binat 31) was undertaken as a simulated (table-top) exercise.

Linking in with other agencies such as SECamb, Kent police, local authority emergency planning teams and the Kent Resilience Forum, BINAT 30 provided a real-time opportunity for responders from both the French and UK agencies to test their joint Emergency plans and procedures. This involved a considerable commitment from all of the agencies taking part.

Exercises have now resumed and the first practical binational exercise since the pandemic (Binat 32) took place at the end of April 2022. This tested the communications for command and control, logistics for casualty handling (post-fire) and cross channel working. Debriefs and outcomes were

recorded with joint actions for both UK and French sides and published in unison with Eurotunnel. To ensure that it remained relevant and fit for purpose, the Channel Tunnel Bi-national emergency plan was updated in July 2021.

As part of the MIRG EU, the Authority has entered into an agreement with counterparts in France, Holland and Belgium for an agreed response and procedures to incidents in the English Channel.

The Authority plans for and undertakes regular operational exercises against the current risks and threats in Kent and Medway. These test the efficacy of our emergency planning and the use of joint emergency services interoperability principles (JESIP). The scenarios and location of the service level exercises are determined by giving close consideration to risks in the National Risk Register, our multi-agency Kent Community Risk Register and the information the Authority holds relating to specific premises within its risk management system. Throughout 21/22, the exercises undertaken included live exercises at a 'complex building' (Walmer Castle), a cyber attack at our control room and regulated industrial site (the BP refinery on the Isle of Grain).

In addition to the variety of live exercises that were undertaken, a number of table top exercises were held, including one of a fire in a high-rise and a test and review of organisational and corporate response to the scenarios presented within some of those exercises.

3.2 National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF)

The NCAF has been designed to provide robust and flexible response arrangements to major emergencies that can be adapted to the nature, scale and requirements of the incident. Fire and rescue authorities must proactively engage with, and support, the NCAF arrangements including the NFCC's (National Fire Chiefs Council) lead operational role.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

Kent Fire and Rescue Service maintains a Critical incident Framework (CIF) that ensures we are able to respond to critical and major incidents and continue to maintain essential services. The Framework ensures that KFRS has suitable management and coordination arrangements in place to respond to such incidents. These include arrangements for categorising and escalating incidents. Within this the links to local, regional and national coordination processes are set out.

This includes identifying the need to report 'trigger' incidents into the [National Coordination and Advisory Framework \(NCAF\) Electronic Support System](#).

The KFRS procedure for reporting 'trigger' incidents is managed through the KFRS Control Centre. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is held on the control system. This SOP lists the 'trigger' incident types that require reporting to NCAF. A prompt to consider activation of this SOP is also listed against the incident type within the mobilising system, ensuring that NCAF reporting is carried out at the point at which the incident type is defined and confirmed.

The CIF arrangements are tested annually as part of the KFRS Strategic Exercise. This includes consideration of NCAF reporting. These exercises are subject to a full and robust debrief and operational assurance process.

We are able to offer resources via the [National Resilience Fire Control](#). Throughout the covid-19 pandemic we have made our range of National Resilience Assets available if required.

3.3 Response to Terrorist Attacks or MTFA

Fire and rescue services must be able to respond to the threat of terrorism and be ready to respond to incidents within their areas and across England. Fire and rescue services should also be interoperable to provide operational support across the UK to terrorist events as required.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

Although several exercises were postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, under normal circumstances, the Authority plans and undertakes regular operational exercises throughout the year. These test the efficacy of our emergency planning, the use of joint emergency services interoperability principles (JESIP).

The issues raised in the recommendations of the Kerslake Report into the terrorist attack at Manchester Arena on May 2017, are supported by the Authority's plans and activities. For example, we have amended talkgroups on airwaves radios in line with the recommendations of the report.

Further commentary on this section is withheld due to the sensitivity of the area.

3.4 National Resilience Assurance

Fire and rescue authorities must continue to work collectively and with the Fire and Rescue Strategic Resilience Board and the national resilience lead authority to provide assurance to government that:

- existing national resilience capabilities are fit for purpose and robust; and
- risks and plans are assessed and any gaps in capability that are needed to ensure national resilience are identified.

Fire and rescue authorities with MTFA teams must work with police forces and ambulance trusts to provide tri-service assurance of this capability.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

Kent leads on the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Fire and Rescue Marine Response Group and the NFCC Operations Co-ordination Group.

As part of the Fire and Rescue Marine Response Group the Authority has entered into an agreement with counterparts in France, Holland and Belgium for an agreed response and procedures to incidents in the English Channel.

We have a variety of National Resilience Assets that are exercised both locally and nationally. Assets include: Urban Search and Rescue; National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers; Enhanced Logistics Support; High Volume Pump; Detection; Identification and Monitoring; Tactical Advisors specialising in a variety of areas.

Because of the responsibilities related to the Channel Tunnel, exercises are undertaken with the Authority's counterparts in France, Belgium and Holland. However, as mentioned in section 2.3, the coronavirus pandemic meant the annual joint UK-French exercise in the Channel Tunnel for 2021 (Binat 31) was undertaken as a simulated (table-top) exercise.

However, exercises have now resumed and the first practical binational exercise since the pandemic (Binat 32) took place at the end of April. This tested the communications for command and control, logistics for casualty handling (post-fire) and cross channel working. Debriefs and outcomes were recorded with joint actions for both UK and French sides and published in unison with Eurotunnel. To ensure that it remained relevant and fit for purpose, the Channel Tunnel Bi-national emergency plan was updated in July 2021.

We are key organisation within the [Kent Resilience Forum \(KRF\)](#). The KRF is a local resilience forum which has been set up to ensure that agencies and organisations plan and work together, to ensure a co-ordinated response to emergencies that could have a significant impact on communities in Kent. It was fundamental to coordinating the response to both the coronavirus pandemic and the UK's departure from the EU.

The Authority also hosts and manages the Kent Resilience Team (KRT). Part of the KRF, the KRT is a multi-agency initiative to transform the delivery of emergency planning services in order to achieve better outcomes for the people of Kent. It does so by improving the effectiveness of the planning, response and recovery from emergencies. This is in line with both the [National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums](#) and the [National Coordination and Advisory Framework for England](#).

Section 4. Governance

4.1 Managing the Fire and Rescue Service/Chief Fire Officer

Each fire and rescue authority will appoint an individual – commonly known as a Chief Fire Officer – who has responsibility for managing the fire and rescue service. Each fire and rescue authority must hold this person to account for the exercise of their functions and the functions of persons under their direction and control.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

Kent Fire and Rescue Service is overseen and run by a dedicated local authority called the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority. The [Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority](#) ('the Authority') is responsible for ensuring that it delivers its services in accordance with the prevailing legislation, regulations and government guidance and that proper standards of stewardship, conduct, and professional competence are followed to by those working for and with the Authority.

The Authority meets three times a year and comprises 25 elected councillors appointed by Kent County Council (21 councillors) and Medway Council (4 councillors) as well as the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

Meetings of the Fire Authority are open to the public and agenda packs, reports and minutes are made publically available on our website.

Our [constitutional and governance documents](#) set out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made, and the rules and procedures governing Authority meetings and decision-taking. These comprise the following:

- The Kent Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997. This is the Order made by Parliament which first established the Authority. It contains the Constitution of the Authority and prescribes the arrangements for the Authority to take over responsibility for Kent Fire Brigade from Kent County Council on 1 April 1998.
- Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority Standing Orders. These are rules for the operation of Authority and Committee meetings.
- Committee Terms of Reference
- Scheme of delegation of powers to the Chief Executive. This sets out those decisions which can only be taken by the Authority or one of its committees (i.e. by Members of the Authority), and those which can be taken by the Chief Executive or other officers.
- Convention on Member and Officer relationships. This deals with the working relationships between Members (both as individuals and collectively within their political groups) and the officers (i.e. the paid staff) of the Authority.
- Code of Corporate Governance. This is the means through which the Authority applies the CIPFA principles of good governance and sets out how the Authority meets each of these principles in its day-to-day activities.

We publish an [annual governance statement](#). This is the report of the review of the Authority's governance and systems of internal control, along with an assessment of their effectiveness. The legal requirement to undertake this annual review is set out in [Section 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#).

All local authorities are required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint a Monitoring Officer whose statutory duty is to report to the Authority on any proposed actions which may contravene the law or constitute maladministration. In February 2021, [the Authority approved the proposal for the appointment of a new Monitoring Officer](#) from Medway Council for a four year team from the period 01/04/2021 to 31/03/2025.

4.2 Documents to be prepared

Each FRA is expected to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), Annual statement of assurance, financial plans (a medium-term financial strategy, an efficiency plan and a reserves strategy).

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

The first stage in developing the Authority's plans is to consider the long-term aim and objectives. Once these have been assessed and agreed by Members, proposals for changes are drawn up and the Authority publishes a consultation document called the [Safety and Wellbeing Plan](#). The purpose of this is to inform the public about changes we intend to make, or would like the public's views on, before we make them. Proposals for changes are drawn up and consulted upon with staff, members of the public, businesses and community groups. Once published the plan also provides a summary of what the public receive for the money, they pay in council tax to help run the fire and rescue service across Kent and Medway.

The feedback that is received from the public is then analysed and reported to the [Fire Authority](#) and, where relevant, acted upon.

Once agreed by Members, the outcomes of the Safety and Wellbeing Plan are then fed into and inform the development of the Customer Safety Plan. Our latest iteration of this is the [Customer Safety Plan 2021-2031](#). This sets out our strategies and ideas for what a modern fire and rescue service should do for the public it serves. The Customer Safety Plan incorporates the medium-term financial plan and infrastructure programme and

also provides details of the Authority's performance over the previous year, targets for the coming years and an improvement action plan explaining how we intend to achieve these targets.

[Corporate Strategies](#). As part of the Customer Safety Plan, each Directorate within the Service develops a corporate strategy that sets out how it will meet the objectives in the Customer Safety Plan. We refresh our corporate strategies every four years, using the analysis of what the future holds, our aim and objectives, and our key themes. The strategies set out our aims over that period and what we would like to achieve in specific areas. The current six corporate strategies are as follows:

1. Response and Resilience
2. Customer Engagement and Safety
3. People
4. Assets and Environmental Improvement
5. Business Change, Information and Technology
6. Commercial and Procurement

In relation to financial plans, we publish the following documents:

[Medium Term Financial Plan](#). Our approach to budgeting is sustainable and business-led and is detailed in a document called the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The latest document covers the four-year period from 2021/22 to 2024/25 and underpins the Customer and Corporate Plan and provides an update on the work of the service and our future plans.

[Treasury Management and Investment Strategy](#). The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code require the Authority to determine and set the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for the financial year ahead as part of the annual budget papers in February of each year.

[Reserves Strategy](#). Every year the Authority's Reserve Strategy is reviewed and updated to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate. There are five earmarked reserves, with by far the largest being the Infrastructure Reserve, which is used to help fund the Authority's capital programme and large one-off IT investments. In challenging financial times, it is prudent to maintain an appropriate level of reserves which will help bridge the gap of any shortfall.

Information about the Authority's reserves is also provided in the [external auditor's annual report for 2020-21](#).

Each year, the Authority also publishes an [Efficiency Statement](#). This presents a general overview of the national and local economic environment in which the Authority is operating and the effect of this upon the planning and delivery of services over the medium term. In doing so, the aim is to offer a degree of context about the way we undertake our financial planning, and also to provide an outline of the approaches used to operate as efficiently as possible.

4.3 National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC)

The NFCC is the first line of operational advice to central and local government during major incidents. This is outlined within the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF), which fire and rescue services must proactively engage with. The NFCC has a role to drive continuous improvement and development throughout the sector. Fire and rescue services should consult the NFCC for advice and support when developing improvement plans, particularly in response to inspections. The expectation is that fire and rescue services in England engage with the NFCC and, in turn, that the NFCC works to support and represent every service.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

Through widespread involvement in the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), we play an active role in sector improvement at the national level.

- Our Chief Executive is one of the [Committee Chairs of the NFCC](#). The Chief Executive is Chair of the NFCC People Coordination Committee and runs the National Collaborative Procurement Board. She also is part of the Covid Committee and is a member of the CRP Board; as is the Assistant Director, Corporate Services.
- The Director of Operations is Co-lead Officer on the NFCC Environmental, Sustainability and Climate Change work stream, which is part of the NFCC Sector Resources and Improvement Committee.
- The Director of Finance and Corporate Services plays a significant role in the Fire Finance network and with the Assistant Director, Corporate Services has been involved in a number of meetings to discuss operational independence.
- The Director Protection, Prevention, Customer Engagement and Safety leads the NFCC Dementia group.
- The Assistant Director Customer and Building Safety is a member of the Prevention Standards Group (along with the Area Manager Building Safety) and also the Prevention Standards Review Panel. He is also an active member of the NFCC South East, Strategic Prevention and Protection Group; the NFCC 'Driving for Better Business' lead; and deputises for the chair of the NFCC Road Safety Group.
- The Assistant Director Response is the NFCC Alternative Fuels and Energy systems lead; a member of the USAR National User Group; and a member of the MTA National User Group.
- Assistant Director Resilience is a member of the ESN Fire Customer group; Eastern Region ESN group; and the MAIT local strategic lead.
- The Assistant Director HR is part of the NFCC Recruitment working group.
- The Area Manager Technical Training and Professional Standards sits on the NFCC Firefighter Charity Strategic Group and is the South East rep for the NFCC National Command and Control User Group.
- The Head of Procurement is the Programme Lead for National Fire Commercial Transformation.
- The Head of Business Change, Information and Technology is a member of the ESN Fire User Group rep.
- The Resilience Manager is the NFCC Business Continuity lead.
- The Education Manager supports the Children and Young People Group.
- KFRS Inclusion Officer is technical lead for NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Section 5. Achieving value for money

5.1 Reserves

Sections 31A, 32, 42A and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires billing and precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement. Each fire and rescue authority should publish their reserves strategy on their website, either as part of their medium-term financial plan or in a separate reserves strategy document. The information on each reserve should make clear how much of the funding falls into the following three categories:

- a. Funding for planned expenditure on projects and programmes over the period of the current medium term financial plan.
- b. Funding for specific projects and programmes beyond the current planning period.
- c. As a general contingency or resource to meet other expenditure needs held in accordance with sound principles of good financial management (e.g. insurance).

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

We have a robust and complaint financial framework, as part of this the following documents are published:

[Medium Term Financial Plan](#). Our approach to budgeting is sustainable and business-led and is detailed in a document called the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The latest document covers the four-year period from 2021/22 to 2024/25 and underpins the Customer and Corporate Plan and provides an update on the work of the service and our future plans.

[Treasury Management and Investment Strategy](#). The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code require the Authority to determine and set the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for the financial year ahead as part of the annual budget papers in February of each year.

[Reserves Strategy](#). Every year the Authority's Reserve Strategy is reviewed and updated to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate. There are five earmarked reserves, with by far the largest being the Infrastructure Reserve, which is used to help fund the Authority's capital programme and large one-off IT investments. In challenging financial times, it is prudent to maintain an appropriate level of reserves which will help bridge the gap of any shortfall.

Information about the Authority's reserves is also provided in the [external auditor's annual report for 2020-21](#).

The authority produces a [Capital Strategy](#) which sets out an outline of the reporting requirements that it should be meeting. As this represents the long-term capital investment for the Authority it has been regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. Members last agreed the Capital Strategy at the February 2021 Authority meeting and were updated on the latest plans regarding Ashford Live Fire training facilities in October 2021. Since then, this has been updated to reflect the latest capital forecasts.

Each year, the Authority also publishes an [Efficiency Statement](#). This presents a general overview of the national and local economic environment in which the Authority is operating and the effect of this upon the planning and delivery of services over the medium term. In doing so, the aim is to

offer a degree of context about the way we undertake our financial planning, and also to provide an outline of the approaches used to operate as efficiently as possible.

5.2 Commercial Transformation

Each fire and rescue authority must demonstrate that it is achieving value for money for the goods and services it receives. Every fire and rescue authority should look at ways to improve its commercial practices including whether they can aggregate their procurement with other fire and rescue authorities and other local services (e.g. police) to achieve efficiencies.

Fire and rescue authorities must demonstrate and support national and local commercial transformation programmes where appropriate. Each fire and rescue authority should be able to demonstrate full awareness of the objectives to standardise requirements, aggregate demand and manage suppliers of products and services within their commercial arrangements.

Fire and rescue authorities must ensure that their commercial activities, be that the placement of new contracts or the use of existing contracts, is in line with their legal obligations, including but not limited to the Public Contracts Regulations, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and transparency commitments.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

We have a [Commercial and Procurement Strategy](#), which sets out our approach to buy goods and services in such a way that we deliver value for money on every pound spent with our suppliers, whilst complying with EU Directives and UK Government policy that govern public sector procurement.

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

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

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

To this end, our [Modern Slavery Policy](#) sets out our commitment to ensure modern slavery is not taking place anywhere in our own business, in any of our supply chains and to be sufficiently trained to identify risks when performing our front line services. Part of the requirements of the Modern Slavery Policy is the publication of a Transparency in Supply Chains Statement. The statement demonstrates the work the Authority has, and will, continue to undertake to eradicate modern slavery in its supply arrangements.

[Transparency in Supply Chains Statement](#). In accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, we are committed to respecting, protecting, and championing the human rights of all who come into contact with our service, including our employees, supply chain workers, customers and local communities. We have zero tolerance of modern slavery, and it is therefore totally unacceptable in our organisation and supply chains. We welcome the increasing momentum towards mandatory human-rights due diligence and are therefore fully committed to supporting the government tackle modern slavery, which is an important element of our approach to delivering our Service. Our Transparency in Supply Chains Statement is a reflection of our commitment to this.

[Equality in Procurement at Kent Fire and Rescue Service](#). In response to the Equality Act 2010 and our own values in promoting equality in everything we do, we want people who work with us to also demonstrate the same commitment to fairness and equality. To this end we have a formalised approach to Equality in Procurement at Kent Fire and Rescue Service. We consider it necessary for organisations who intend to supply goods, works or services to us or on our behalf to demonstrate that reasonably practicable steps have been taken to allow equal access and treatment in employment and services for all and can give evidence of their approach to meeting the requirements of the law.

5.3 Research and Development

Fire and rescue authorities should engage with national research and development programmes, including those overseen by the NFCC, unless there is a good reason not to.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

We have a dedicated research and development resource in the Customer Engagement and Safety Team who support the development and improvement of services within Community Safety and Building Safety.

A key function is to ensure all of our prevention and protection interventions are underpinned by evidence through undertaking research and evaluation. Our approach to research and development is set out in our Customer Engagement and Safety Strategy. We have also developed an Evaluation Framework to help ensure our approach to intervention evaluation follows best practice and is of suitable quality. This framework was shared with the NFCC and SE prevention network members.

Research is currently supporting a number of corporate projects and initiatives with the Customer Engagement and Safety Team, which feed into wider strategic and corporate objectives.

We are undertaking a greater level of research and using behavioural theories to evaluate initiatives against, ensuring we are as effective as possible in our approach. We are also undertaking research to better understand who our customers are, what their perceptions of the fire and rescue service are, and how we can best communicate with them to deliver safety initiatives more efficiently.

<p>We research behaviour in fires in the home to tailor our customer safety activities and improve the advice we give to people about staying safe. This also supports operational training and emergency call management.</p> <p>The Authority also sponsored world-leading doctoral research on human behaviour in dwelling fires, the outcomes of which supported several areas of Service activity.</p>
<p>5.4 Trading</p> <p>Fire and rescue authorities have the power to trade and make a profit but they must ensure that their commercial activities are performed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), the Local Government Order 2009 and the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970. Fire and rescue authorities must also ensure that such commercial activities are exercised through a company within the meaning of Part 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.</p>
<p>How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?</p>
<p>The Authority does not have a trading arm and has no plans to engage in such activity.</p>

Section 6. Workforce

6.1 People Strategy

Each fire and rescue authority should have in place a people strategy that has been designed in collaboration with the workforce.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

Our [People Strategy 2021-25](#) sets out how we aim to improve organisational performance by ensuring that everyone has the right skills, capabilities and involvement to make life safer for the people of Kent. Delivery of this plan will ensure that the highest standards of leadership and management are in place to sustain a motivated and engaged workforce. We believe this will foster an organisational culture which truly embraces the diversity and individuality of people and the need for inclusiveness.

6.2 Professional Standards

To enhance professionalism of fire and rescue services, a coherent and comprehensive set of professional standards across all areas of fire and rescue services' work will be developed, drawing on existing standards where appropriate. The development of new standards will be on an ongoing basis.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

At the time of writing the Fire Standards Board have approved and published the following ten fire standards:

- Code of Ethics
- Community Risk Management Planning
- Emergency Response Driving
- Fire Investigation
- Operational Competence
- Operational Learning
- Operational Preparedness
- Prevention
- Protection
- Safeguarding

The Authority has undertaken a gap analysis of its position against each of the published fire standards. This has identified that the Authority is compliant with the majority of the key areas of each of the ten standards.

During the consultation period, the Authority has been an active participant and engaged with and responded to each of the consultations on the proposed fire standards. As and when consultation opens on additional standards, the Authority will continue to engage actively with the process.

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

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

In relation to ethical standards, in 2021 the Authority introduced a code of ethical conduct and made it a requirement for all staff to sign it. This sets out the Authority's values and commitment to fairness and equality.

We also have a [Code of Corporate Governance](#). This sets out the seven key principles of good governance which the Authority has adopted and the means by which these principles are adhered to and evidenced. The principles set out here represent the core philosophy of the Authority. It was reviewed and updated in 2020 to incorporate the requirements of [new guidance issued by CIPFA](#) regarding financial management in public authorities.

[Code of Conduct for Members of the Fire Authority](#). Requirement for all Members of the Authority to conduct themselves, when undertaking the business of the Authority, in accordance with our values and ethics. Also contains the mechanism by which inappropriate or unethical behaviour can be reported and investigated.

We publish an [annual report on Members' standards, allowances and travel expenses](#). No complaints alleging that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct have been made to the Authority during the past year.

All local authorities are required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint a Monitoring Officer whose statutory duty is to report to the Authority on any proposed actions which may contravene the law or constitute maladministration. In February 2021, [the Authority approved the proposal for the appointment of a new Monitoring Officer](#) from Medway Council for a four year team from the period 01/04/2021 to 31/03/2025.

6.3 Fitness Principles

Fire and rescue authorities have an important role in helping to ensure their firefighters remain fit and are supported in remaining in employment. Each fire and rescue authority must comply with the fitness principles set out at Annex C.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

The Authority's sets out the fitness standards required and the process by which this is monitored and tested for operational personnel. A copy of the Health and Wellbeing Guidance is available on request.

All operational staff are subject to testing annually and support given to anyone falling below the required fitness level. We have a number of Physical Training Instructors on the establishment, coordinated by a full time fitness advisor. The working day is structured to allow one hour per day fitness training for all operational personnel. Gyms or fitness equipment is provided on all stations.

The Capability Policy provides for a process of adjustment and redeployment where an individual cannot maintain or regain the required fitness level. A number of colleagues have already been redeployed under this policy.

In addition to physical health, the Authority has a strong focus on actively supporting the mental well-being of staff. KFRS takes the issue of mental health very seriously, particularly as in the course of their work, firefighters can be exposed to potentially distressing scenes. Great importance is placed on supporting colleagues with their physical and mental wellbeing and we have developed a culture which actively challenges the stigma around mental health and the associated barriers to seeking help and support for mental well-being.

The Authority has signed up to the [Government's Workplace Wellbeing Charter](#) and we have in place all the appropriate support arrangements, and referral systems into our occupational health provider (irrespective of whether operational staff or corporate staff).

Four years ago we introduced the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The EAP helpline is available 24 hours a day, throughout the year and offers access to trained counsellors will offer help and support in a professional, friendly and non-judgmental manner.

This is supplemented by a network of Wellbeing Champions. These are staff volunteers who provide a confidential service to support the physical and mental wellbeing of colleagues by discussing options and signposting to available resources.

6.4 Re-engagement of Senior Officers

Fire and rescue authorities must not re-appoint principal fire officers after retirement to their previous, or a similar, post save for in exceptional circumstances when such a decision is necessary in the interests of public safety. Any such appointment must be transparent, justifiable and time limited.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

The Authority responded to the Government's consultation on the draft Fire and Rescue National Framework and stated its commitment to not re-appointing principal fire officers after retirement to their previous or a similar post.

KMFRA oversight of senior appointments through the [Senior officer Appointment and Conditions Committee](#).

When an employee retires from the Authority, they may choose to set themselves up as a consultant. On occasions there has been a need to reengage that individual for their specific expertise and skills. Each year's published [Pay Policy Statement](#) contains a section covering the rules around the re-engagement of former employees.

If this option is taken up, then a taxation test called IR35 needs to be applied. If the consultant meets the thresholds for IR35 to apply, meaning that the consultant is effectively an employee, it is officers' recommendation that abatement rules should also then be applied. At the meeting of the Fire Authority in April 2019, the Authority approved the proposal that abatement will be applied where ex-employees return to the Authority as consultants.

Section 7. Inspection, intervention and accountability

7.1 Inspection

All fire and rescue authorities must cooperate with the inspectorate and its inspectors to enable them to deliver their statutory function. This includes providing relevant data and information to inform inspections. The Home Office and HMICFRS will work together to align data and information collections where possible to avoid duplication. Fire and rescue authorities must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS and – if recommendations are made – prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

At the time of writing, we are awaiting the outcome of the second round of inspections which is expected to be provided before March 2023.

In January 2021, [HMICFRS published the results of its inspection of the Authority's response to the coronavirus pandemic](#). The inspectorate praised the Authority's ability to meet the significant demands placed on it by the pandemic whilst maintaining its statutory duties and acting as the national lead for PPE distribution. Consequently, the arrangements and systems of control employed by the Authority have been shown to be robust and effective, which have allowed it to adapt to the significant challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

In 2019 the Authority received its first inspection by HMICFRS. [The inspectorate rated KFRS as 'Good' across the three inspection pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People](#), reflecting the high standard of service provided by the Authority. Of the 45 FRAs which were inspected in

2018/19, the Authority was one of only 16 to have been awarded 'good' in all three pillars. The Inspectorate did not identify any 'causes of concern' (the most serious level) and identified just eight areas for improvement (the least serious level). The breakdown of these eight areas of improvement across the three pillars is as follows: six in the Effectiveness pillar; and one each in the Efficiency and People pillars. Although there is no requirement placed on the Authority to do so, following the inspection by HMICFRS, we prepared an action plan that addressed each of the eight areas for improvement.

The Inspectorate identified several areas where the Authority was showing notably good practice, particular highlights included the Authority's ability to respond to incidents effectively and to spend public money appropriately and responsibly. The report also found that the Authority offers 'excellent wellbeing support' for staff, noting a culture of 'trust and empowerment'.

In the [HMICFRS press release following their inspection of KFRS](#), in this HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Zoë Billingham stated:

"I am pleased that we have rated Kent Fire and Rescue Service as 'good' across all three areas of our inspection, in terms of its efficiency, effectiveness and the way it looks after its staff. This is a modern and innovative fire service that is prepared to find new ways of doing things. Many other fire and rescue services could learn from the example it sets. The service performs well in one of its primary duties: responding to fires and other emergencies. We found good collaboration with other local emergency services, including the ambulance service and the police, which improves the service given to the people of Kent."

7.2 Intervention

Section 22 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 gives powers to the Secretary of State to intervene should a fire and rescue authority fail, or be likely to fail, to act in accordance with this Framework.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

The Authority is not in this position, therefore this section is not relevant in this context.

7.3 Accountability

Fire and rescue authorities are expected to have governance and accountability arrangements in place covering issues such as financial management and transparency, complaints and discipline arrangements, and compliance with the seven principles of public life.

In demonstrating their accountability to communities for the service they provide, fire and rescue authorities need to:

- be transparent and accountable to their communities for their decisions and actions;
- provide the opportunity for communities to help to plan their local service through effective consultation and involvement; and
- have scrutiny arrangements in place that reflect the high standard communities expect for an important public safety service.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

[Meetings of the Fire Authority are open to the public](#) and agenda packs, reports and minutes are made publically available. In addition, the following documents relating to the governance of the Fire Authority are publically available:

- [Standing orders](#). These are rules for the operation of Authority and Committee meetings.
- [Scheme of Delegation of Powers to the Chief Executive](#). This sets out those decisions which can only be taken by the Authority or one of its committees (i.e. by Members of the Authority), and those which can be taken by the Chief Executive or other officers.
- [Convention on Member and Officer relationships](#). This deals with the working relationships between Members (both as individuals and collectively within their political groups) and the officers (i.e. the paid staff) of the Authority.

Consultation with the public and partners is an important part of how the Authority operates. We publish a consultation document called the [Safety and Wellbeing Plan](#). The purpose of this is to inform the public about changes we intend to make, or would like the public's views on, before we make them. Proposals for changes are drawn up and consulted upon with staff, members of the public, businesses and community groups.

The feedback that is received from the public is then analysed and reported to the [Fire Authority](#) and, where relevant, acted upon.

In relation to standards, in 2021 the Authority wrote a code of ethical conduct and made it a requirement for all staff to sign it. This sets out the Authority's values and commitment to fairness and equality.

[Code of Conduct for Members of the Fire Authority](#). Requirement for all Members of the Authority to conduct themselves, when undertaking the business of the Authority, in accordance with our values and ethics. Also contains the mechanism by which inappropriate or unethical behaviour can be reported and investigated. In connection with this, we publish an [annual report on Members' standards, allowances and travel expenses](#).

All local authorities are required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint a Monitoring Officer whose statutory duty is to report to the Authority on any proposed actions which may contravene the law or constitute maladministration. In February 2021, [the Authority approved the proposal for the appointment of a new Monitoring Officer](#) from Medway Council for a four year team from the period 01/04/2021 to 31/03/2025.

Our [Code of Corporate Governance](#) sets out the seven key principles of good governance which the Authority has adopted and the means by which these principles are adhered to and evidenced. The principles set out here represent the core philosophy of the Authority. It was reviewed and updated in 2020 to incorporate the requirements of [new guidance issued by CIPFA](#) regarding financial management in public authorities.

The Authority has an effective and up-to-date suite of policies covering anti-fraud bribery, anti-fraud and corruption and anti-money laundering. The Speak Up Policy ensures arrangements are in place to give staff the confidence to challenge and report allegations of inappropriate behaviour and the gives the Authority the means to investigate such reports. The Bullying and Harassment Policy makes clear the expectations on all of all employees and ensures we understand our responsibilities. Its purpose is to promote and support a working environment and culture free from bullying and harassment. There is also a formalised process for managing allegations against staff.

The Customer Feedback Policy ensures that feedback received by the Authority is dealt with fairly and properly. The Authority is committed to transparency and an analysis of feedback received is reported to the Authority annually in a publicly available report. We also offer several communications channels, including social media, through which the public are able to [get in contact, provide feedback and offer their views](#).

7.4 Transparency

Each fire and rescue authority must comply with their statutory transparency requirements. The nature of the requirements is dependent on the legal basis of the authority; for example, combined fire and rescue authorities would be subject to the Local Authority Transparency Code 2015 while PCC FRAs must comply with requirements under section 11 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) Order 2011. All fire and rescue authorities should therefore publish certain information, including: senior salaries; register of interests; staffing; income and expenditure; property; rights and liabilities; and decisions of significant public interest. Fire and rescue authorities must make their communities aware of how they can access data and information on their performance.

How to we meet these requirements and get assurance?

[Making information publically available on our website](#). In line with the requirements of Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017, we publish a comprehensive and detailed range of information on our website. This covers information including monthly spend reports, register of suppliers, and senior officers' pay.

As per the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Authority publishes and [Publication and Retention Scheme](#). This sets out the classes of information held and the duration (retention period) for which information will be kept.

We publish a full range of [financial information about the Authority](#). This includes, but is not limited to, the statement of accounts, medium term financial plan, monthly spend reports and 10 year capital strategy.

As part of the annual audit of the financial statements, Grant Thornton, the Authority's External Auditors, are required to give [a separate opinion on Value for Money](#) which focusses on ascertaining if the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The first of these was published in November 2021 and reported to the meeting of the Fire Authority.

[External audit](#). The Authority is statutorily obliged to have a yearly audit conducted by an external audit firm. Grant Thornton was appointed the authority's auditor in 2018/19 by the Public Sector Audit Appointments and will fulfil this role for the next five years. The [annual audit report](#) is made publically available on our website.

Internal audit. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Authority to maintain an adequate and effective Internal Audit process and, as such, this is provided by Kent County Council under a service level agreement. Each year the Head of Internal Audit brings an [annual report](#) and a [mid-year progress report](#), to the Authority meetings. Based on the outcomes of internal audits, action plans will be developed where appropriate and follow up audits undertaken to review progress against any issues identified. This is reflective of our commitment to a culture of continuous improvement and transparency in our activities.

Joint Statement by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Executive

We acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring the proper governance of the Authority's affairs and the need to give due regard to the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework. We confirm that this Statement of Assurance represents an honest and full assessment of the levels of assurance we have obtained following the assessment process as described above.

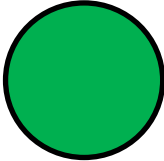
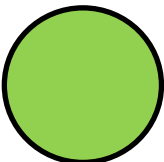
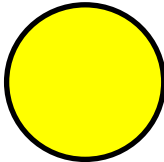
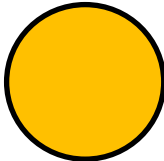
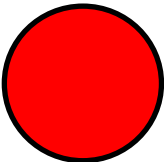
Nick Chard

Chair, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Date: XXXX 2022

Ann Millington

Chief Executive, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Assurance level	Definition of assurance levels
High 	<p>Internal control, Governance and the management of risk are at a high standard. The arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal controls are extremely well designed and applied effectively. Processes are robust and well-established. There is a sound system of control operating effectively and consistently applied to achieve service/system objectives. There are examples of best practice. No significant weaknesses have been identified.</p>
Substantial 	<p>Internal Control, Governance and management of risk are sound overall. The arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal controls are largely suitably designed and applied effectively. Whilst there is a largely sound system of controls there are few matters requiring attention. These do not have a significant impact on residual risk exposure but need to be addressed within a reasonable timescale.</p>
Adequate 	<p>Internal control, Governance and management of risk is adequate overall however, there were areas of concern identified where elements of residual risk or weakness with some of the controls may put some of the system objectives at risk. There are some significant matters that require management attention with moderate impact on residual risk exposure until resolved.</p>
Limited 	<p>Internal Control, Governance and the management of risk are inadequate and result in an unacceptable level of residual risk. Effective controls are not in place to meet all the system/service objectives and/or controls are not being consistently applied. Certain weaknesses require immediate management attention as there is a high risk that objectives will not be achieved.</p>
No Assurance 	<p>Internal Control, Governance and management of risk is poor. For many risk areas there are significant gaps in the procedures and controls. Due to the absence of effective controls and procedures no reliance can be placed on their operation. Immediate action is required to address the whole control framework before serious issues are realised in this area with high impact on residual risk exposure until resolved.</p>

This page has been left blank

Summary of the likely provisions of a refreshed data protection bill

1. Requirement to implement a 'Privacy Management Programme' (PMP). A privacy management programme is a structured framework which supports organisations to meet their legal compliance obligations, meet the expectations of customers and partners, fulfil privacy rights and mitigate the risks of a data breach. This is not prescriptive like the requirements of the UK GDPR. Instead organisations will have to implement a privacy management programme based on the level of processing activities they are engaged in and the volume and sensitivity of the personal data they handle.
2. Removal of Data Protection Officers (DPOs). These will be replaced with a 'senior individual responsible for data protection', who will oversee the 'privacy management programme'. Most of the tasks of the DPO will be carried out by this individual.
3. Replacement of Data Protection Impact Assessments with a continued requirement to identify and manage risks, but with 'greater flexibility' as to how to meet these requirements. Nonetheless, will be required to ensure there are risk assessment tools in place for the identification, assessment and mitigation of data protection risks across the organisation.
4. Replacement of records of processing activities with personal data inventories as part of their privacy management programme, which describe what and where personal data is held, why it has been collected and how sensitive it is.
5. Reporting data breaches. No changes will be introduced to alter the threshold for reporting a data breach. In terms of accountability, will be subject to the same sanctions as under the current regime (maximum fine of £17.5 million or 4 per cent of annual global turnover – whichever is greater).
6. Subject Access Requests. The government plans to proceed with changing the current threshold for refusing or charging a reasonable fee for a subject access request from 'manifestly unfounded or excessive' to 'vexatious or excessive', which will bring it in line with the Freedom of Information regime. The government does not intend to re-introduce a nominal fee for processing subject access requests.
7. In the immediate term the government intends to permit cookies (and similar technologies) to be placed on a user's device without explicit consent, "*for a small number of other non-intrusive purposes*". It is anticipated this will include analytics cookies which allow organisations to measure traffic to webpages and improve offerings to users. In the future the government intends to legislate to remove the need for websites to display cookie banners to UK residents.
8. With the ICO, the government plans to proceed with the proposal to introduce a new statutory framework of objectives and duties, requirements for it to report on its approach and performance. There is an intention to introduce a statement of strategic priorities for

the ICO to have regard to when discharging its data protection functions. There is also an intention to move away from the 'corporation sole' structure to a 'body corporate', to bring the ICO in line with most regulators in the UK. This may also be accompanied by a new name for the ICO.

By: Director Finance and Corporate Services
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority - 13 October 2022
Subject: TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report was reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee at its 22 September meeting and is recommended for approval to the Full Authority.

The Authority is required by the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual review of treasury management activities and the estimated and actual prudential and treasury indicators for the year. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

The Authority continued to prioritise security and liquidity over potential yield in line with CIPFA guidance. Interest rates remained low for most of the year but there were increases in Q1 2022, in line with the Bank of England's base rate hikes, with the Authority receiving total investment income of £75k for the year on an average cash balance of £50.6m.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

1. Approve this year-end report on Treasury Management activity for 2021/22 as recommended by the Audit and Governance Committee.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions - Nicola Walker
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext. 6122
EMAIL: Nicola.walker@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: Treasury Management Strategy – 21 February 2021

COMMENTS

Introduction

1. The Authority approved the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2021/22 at its meeting on 21 February 2021 (Minute 38). In light of the introduction of the new Audit and Governance committee during 2021/22, the inaugural meeting of this new committee held on the 25 November 2021, received a mid-year Treasury update for Members consideration and agreement. The report reviewed the main aspects of the Authority's Treasury Management up to the end of October 2021 (mid-year), as required by the Local Government Act 2003 and the CIPFA Code on Treasury Management and Capital Finance.
2. The regulatory environment places a responsibility on Members for the review and scrutiny of the Treasury Management Policy and related activities. This report, is therefore, important in providing details of the 2021/22 outturn position for treasury activities during the year and highlights compliance with the Authority's policies previously approved by Members.

Annual Treasury Management Review 2021/22

3. **Economy and Interest rates** - The tight monetary conditions following the pandemic continued through most of 2021/22, which meant opportunities for investment returns were very limited with little material movement in the shorter-term deposit rates. However, on 15 December 2021, The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to increase the bank rate from 0.10% to 0.25%, judging that pressure on households from surging living costs outweighed the risks to the economy from the new variant. This was followed by a second increase in February 2022 to 0.50%, and on 16 March 2022, the MPC voted to raise the bank rate to 0.75% - the third consecutive rise in borrowing costs, taking interest rates back to pre-Covid levels.
4. **Inflation** - The Bank of England has for some time had an inflation target of 2%. However, the recent 'perfect storm' of supply and labour shortages, commodity price inflation, the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and subsequent Western sanctions are all collectively resulting in an inflationary spiral, with elevated levels forecast until well into 2023.
5. **Treasury Position as at 31 March 2022** - The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) at 31 March 2022 is the net amount of capital expenditure not yet fully funded. The difference between the CFR and the amount of outstanding loans is the element of capital expenditure being temporarily funded from internal cash balances (under-borrowing). **Table 1** shows this comparison to the previous year.

Table 1 – Treasury Position Compared to Previous Year

	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-22
	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	2,798	1,829
External PWLB Borrowing	-1,425	-1,001
Internal Borrowing (Under-borrowing)	1,373	828
Total Deposits	48,071	49,621
Less PWLB Borrowing	-1,425	-1,001
Net Deposits	46,646	48,620

6. **Strategy for 2021/22** - The Investment Strategy for 2021/22, agreed at the February 2021 Authority meeting, saw no changes from the 2020/21 Strategy. However, at the April 2021 Authority meeting Members agreed to increase the deposit limits in Money Market funds from £15m to £25m.
7. The Authority deposits cash balances in a number of different bank deposit and call accounts, money market funds and also makes use of the Debt Management Office Treasury Bills. This provides a spread of risk across the accounts and enables the Authority to make the best use of the available rates whilst still prioritising Security and Liquidity over Yield. Treasury Bills started off the year in negative territory and later returned an average interest rate of 0.68% at the end of the year. During the year, a new account was opened with the Leeds Building Society. The Authority also gained access to a new Money Market Fund, Goldman Sachs Sterling Liquid Reserves. The Treasury team continue to meet with our Bank Relationship Managers to identify new products and available rates.
8. **Borrowing in 2021/22** - The 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy stated that “no new borrowing is planned”, and that was indeed the case for 2021/22. During 2021/22, the Authority maintained an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Authority’s reserves, balances and cashflow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as investment returns were very low and minimising counterparty risk on placing investments also needed to be considered.
9. **Borrowing outturn for 2021/22** - During 2021/22 the Authority repaid two loans totalling £424k, which had an interest rate of 4.75%. The balance of outstanding loans at 31 March 2022 was £1,001k. **Table 2** below details the maturity structure of the remaining loans held by the Authority as at 31 March 2022, all of which are provided by the PWLB at a fixed rate interest.

Table 2 – Maturity Structure of Remaining Loan Portfolio

	31-Mar-22
	£'000
Less than one year	300
Between one and two years	301
Between two and five years	400
Total	1,001

10. **Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream** - This indicator shows the impact of the capital plans on the Authority's overall finances (borrowing costs net of investment income), as shown in **Table 3**. **Table 4** details how the net borrowing figure is calculated.

Table 3 – Borrowing Costs net of Investment Income

	2021/22
	Outturn
	£'000
Net Revenue	69,866
Net Borrowing *see Table 4 below for calculation	950
Ratio	1.36%

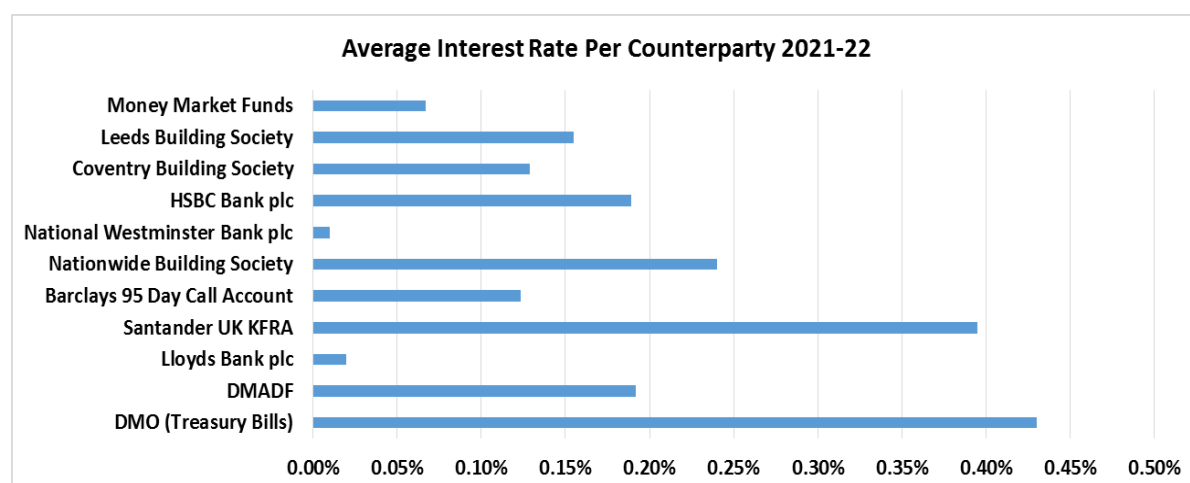
Table 4 – Calculation of Net Borrowing Figure

	2021/22
	Outturn
	£'000
Minimum Revenue Provision and Voluntary Revenue Provision*	969
Interest paid for borrowing	56
Interest and Investment Income	-75
Net Borrowing	950

* The provision made by the Authority to finance its CFR.

11. **Investment Rates in 2021/22** - The Authority maintained an average cash balance of £50.6m which when deposited earned an average annual rate of return of 0.15%. **Graph 1** below shows the average annual rate of interest earned per counterparty on deposits placed over the year. However, up to the end of December 2021 the average return was as low as 0.10%, but this gradually increased in the final 3 months of the year, to result in an average return for the last few weeks in March of 0.53%.

Graph 1



12. **Prudential and Treasury Indicators** - The Table in **Appendix 1** shows the original Prudential and Treasury indicators for 2021/22 together with the actuals for 2020/21 and 2021/22. There were no breaches of limits in 2021/22.
13. **MIFID II Regulations** - These regulations govern the relationship that financial institutions conducting lending and borrowing transactions have with local authorities from 2018. Members will recall that the Authority 'opted up' to become a professional client in order to ensure that it continued to receive the same level of advice on investments and borrowing, and access to the same instruments. There have been no changes with regard to the management and administration of the Authority's Treasury Function that require notification to the financial institutions during this financial year.
14. **Treasury Management Training** - The Treasury Code of Practice states that authorities should ensure that the appropriate level of training is delivered to both Members and staff who are involved in the delivery and scrutiny of the treasury management function. Audit and Governance members received a presentation from Link Asset Group, the Authority's Treasury Advisor before the November 2021 Audit and Governance meeting with a subsequent training session on the latest economic forecast and changes to the Prudential Code and Treasury Management practices scheduled prior to the September 2022 meeting, again provided by Link Asset Group. Officers within the Finance team with direct responsibility, regularly attend seminars and conferences to ensure specialist Treasury and Investment knowledge is kept up to date and a number of them have also completed their CIPFA Treasury e-learning modules. As mentioned at previous meetings, the management of the Treasury function will move back in-house with effect from October 2022.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

15. All financial implications associated with servicing the Treasury Management functions are able to be contained within the overall budget.

RECOMMENDATION

16. Members are requested to:
 - 16.1 Approve the year-end report on Treasury Management activity for 2021/22 as recommended by the Audit and Governance Committee.

Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators

	2020/21 Outturn	2021/22 Original Forecast	2021/22 Outturn
Prudential Indicators for affordability, prudence and capital expenditure			
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Expenditure	71,421	71,573	69,866
Revenue Provision for debt repayment	969	969	969
Capital expenditure	3,517	10,406	1,989
CFR as at 31 March	2,798	1,829	1,829
Total loans outstanding as at 31 March	1,425	1,001	1,001
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	1.32%	1.37%	1.36%
Treasury Indicators			
Assumed Operational Boundary for external debt	18,000	18,000	18,000
Assumed Authorised Limit for external debt	22,000	22,000	22,000
Interest rate exposure for borrowing at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%
Interest rate exposure for borrowing at variable rates	20%	20%	20%
Interest rate exposure for investing at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%
Interest rate exposure for investing at variable rates	100%	100%	100%

This page has been left blank

By: Director Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority - 13 October 2022

Subject: MID - YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT
UPDATE 2022/23

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report is an amalgam of two reports reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee at its 22 September meeting. It provides an update on Treasury activity up to the end of July and proposals of the necessary delegated approvals of Treasury activity.

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code require the Authority to determine and set the Treasury Management Strategy for the financial year ahead. This was agreed at the Authority meeting on 21 February 2022 and a requirement of the Strategy is to provide a Mid-year update on treasury activity undertaken and the extent of compliance with the agreed prudential indicators.

The Authority continues to prioritise security and liquidity over potential yield, in line with CIPFA guidance. Over the last few months interest rates have been gradually increasing, when compared with the 2021/22 financial year. Currently average cash balances have been approximately £48m, which has resulted in an interest yield of £82k to date.

Since this report was written we have seen the Bank of England hike interest rates in an attempt to contain inflation. The Government published their “fiscal event” on 23 September which proposed a wide range of policies with the aim of reforming the supply side of the economy, cutting and simplifying tax and maintaining fiscal discipline with the intent of growing the economy. The market has responded to the announcement with a fall in the value of sterling and the Bank of England advised that it will not hesitate to change interest rates by as much as is needed to return inflation to the 2% target.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions - Nicola Walker
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext. 6122
EMAIL: nicola.walker@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS: Treasury Management Strategy – 21 February 2021

The Bank base rate now sits at 2.25% and is currently forecast to increase to 5% during 2023. The Authority has since revised its forecast on interest yields for the year and therefore anticipates that a return in excess of £750k may materialise.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to approve the following recommendations, as proposed by Audit and Governance Committee.

1. Approve the mid-year report on Treasury Management activity for 2022/23.
2. Approve the roles and responsibilities of Officers and Members in the Treasury process, (paragraph 16 and **Appendix 1** refers).
3. Approve the revised reporting requirements of the Prudential Indicators, (paragraph 17 and **Appendix 2** refers).

COMMENTS

Introduction

1. The Authority operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low-risk counterparties, so as to ensure sufficient funds are available to meet anticipated expenditure before any other consideration is given to optimising investment returns.
2. The second main function of the treasury management service is to ensure that the necessary funding is available, when needed, to meet the agreed commitments set out in the Authority's Capital Plan, whether that's by using the Authority's own cash balances or undertaking any new borrowing. Hence, good treasury management and cashflow planning is key to enable the Authority to meet its capital spending programme.
3. This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2021).

Economic Outlook

4. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased Bank Rate for a sixth consecutive time, at their meeting in August, taking it to 1.75%. Alongside this there was a warning that the UK economy will likely enter recession starting in Q4 this year and this is expected to continue until the end of 2023, with the MPC suggesting a 2.2% decline in GDP.
5. The MPC also appeared to be sending signals that if interest rates rise to 3%, as the markets expect, inflation will be below the 2% target in three years' time. It is worth noting, however, that the Bank's assumptions make no reference to the tax-cutting policies of whichever leadership candidate is chosen by the Conservatives to be Prime Minister.
6. **Inflation** – The Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) rose from 9.1% in May to a new 40-year high of 9.4% in June, with the Bank of England anticipating it will hit 13% in October, its highest since 1980, largely due to the rise in the energy price cap.
7. **Interest Rate Forecast** – Rates available on deposits from counterparties are significantly higher than those of a year ago. The Authority is currently forecasting

investment income of £522k for the year, compared to a budget set in February this year of £192k.

The Authority's treasury advisor, Link Asset Services, has provided the following interest rate forecasts:

Link Group Interest Rate View 09.08.22													
	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25
BANK RATE	2.25	2.50	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.00
3 month ave earnings	2.50	2.80	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.50	2.40	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.20	2.20	2.20
6 month ave earnings	2.90	3.10	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.70	2.60	2.50	2.50	2.40	2.30	2.30
12 month ave earnings	3.20	3.30	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.70	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40
5 yr PWLB	2.80	3.00	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.70	2.70
10 yr PWLB	3.00	3.20	3.30	3.30	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.80
25 yr PWLB	3.40	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.10
50 yr PWLB	3.10	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.80

(PWLB – Public Works Loan Board is a statutory body of the UK Government that provides loans to public bodies)

Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Update

8. The Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) for 2022/23 was approved by the Authority on 21 February 2022. This report reflects the current position of the Authority's deposits, which are in line with the Treasury Management Strategy. The appropriate Prudential Indicators can be found at paragraph 14 within this report.
9. Where projects are reprofiled from time to time or completed under budget, this impacts on reserve balances and hence often results in a higher level of funding being available for depositing with the agreed counter parties. The table below shows the revised forecast of funds available for such purposes. Please note that the budget monitoring is being worked through at the time of preparing this report, and therefore an updated position on the revised figures will be provided to members at the Authority meeting in October.

Table 1	2021/22	2021/22	2022/23
Reserves and Balances	Forecast	Outturn	Revised
	£'000	£'000	£'000
General reserve	3,760	3,760	3,970
Earmarked reserves	23,423	37,561	29,858
Insurance Provision	395	129	129
Capital Receipts	5,805	9,470	4,206
Total Core Funds	33,383	50,920	38,163
Working Capital surplus/(deficit)	1,404	-2,273	-2,273
Under-borrowing	-829	-829	-300

Expected Deposits	33,958	47,818	35,590
--------------------------	---------------	---------------	---------------

10. The Authority's working capital reduced at financial year end 2021/22, as the difference between what we received compared to what we paid out was less than previously forecast, which was generally due to an increase in debtors, notably the pension and collection funds.

Investment Portfolio

11. The Authority's key priority is to ensure security of capital and liquidity and to obtain an appropriate level of return consistent with the Authority's risk appetite. Over the last year, returns on deposits have been gradually increasing, in line with the Bank of England's base rate.
12. The Authority held £63.8m of deposits as at July 2022 (£49.6m at 31 March 2022). A breakdown of the Authority's deposits and the average interest rates that were included in the 2022/23 Annual Treasury Strategy are compared to actual deposits and actual interest rates as at 29 July 2022 (as presented to Audit and Governance Committee in September) in the table below: -

Table 2 Investments and Average Interest Rates

	As At 31.03.22		As At 29.07.22	
	Total Deposits (£000's)	Average Interest Rate	Total Deposits (£000's)	Average Interest Rate
Debt Management Office (Including Treasury Bills)	7,643	0.59%	20,204	1.20%
RBS Group: Royal Bank of Scotland & NatWest	877	0.01%	622	0.10%
Lloyds Bank: Lloyds TSB & HBOS	2,000	0.02%	-	-
Barclays Bank plc	5,000	0.80%	5,000	1.30%
Nationwide Building Society	5,000	0.41%	5,000	0.92%
Santander UK plc	7,000	0.54%	7,000	0.88%
HSBC	7,000	0.75%	7,000	1.25%
Coventry Building Society	5,000	0.19%	2,000	1.15%
Leeds Building Society	2,000	0.79%	2,000	1.25%
Aberdeen Liq. Fund	3,245	0.50%	5,000	1.18%
Aviva Investors Liq. Fund	4,856	0.53%	5,000	1.26%
Goldman Sachs Liq. Reserves	-	-	5,000	1.19%
Totals	49,621	0.53%	63,826	1.15%

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services confirms that the approved limits were within the Annual Investment Strategy and that there is no expectation that these will be breached.

Borrowing

13. The Authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2022/23 is £1,001k. The CFR denotes the Authority's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. Of the Authority's underlying borrowing need, £701k has been borrowed from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLb) and £300k has been utilised from the internal cash flow of the authority in lieu of borrowing. This is a prudent and cost-effective approach in the current economic climate. The Authority continues to pay off outstanding external loans as they become due for repayment and has identified no need to borrow externally to fund the existing Capital Strategy, at this stage.

Prudential Indicators

14. A Summary of the Prudential Indicators agreed at the Authority meeting in February are detailed below and shown against the 2021/22 outturn figures and revised projections for 2022/23.

Table 3 Prudential Indicators for affordability, prudence and capital expenditure

	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23
	Outturn	Budget	Revised
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Expenditure	69,866	77,428	77,428
Revenue Provision for debt repayment	969	828	828
Capital expenditure	1,989	13,191	8,752
CFR as at 31 March	1,829	1,001	1,001
Total loans outstanding as at 31 March	1,001	701	701
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	1.36%	0.88%	0.45%
Treasury Indicators			
Assumed Operational Boundary for external debt	18,000	18,000	18,000
Assumed Authorised Limit for external debt	22,000	22,000	22,000
Interest rate exposure for borrowing at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%
Interest rate exposure for borrowing at variable rates	20%	20%	20%

Interest rate exposure for investing at fixed rates	100%	100%	100%
Interest rate exposure for investing at variable rates	100%	75%	75%

Treasury Management Practices (TMPs)

15. The adoption of the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Practices 2021 were reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee at the April meeting and since then a review of the operational TMPs documentation has taken place over the summer. A consideration within the review was not only the changes within the Code but also changes in practices and authorisations, required as a result of bringing the full Treasury Management function back in-house, within the KFRS Finance Team.
16. As part of the review, the allocation of responsibilities has been updated to reflect the roles and responsibilities of Senior Officers, Full Authority and the Audit and Governance Committee as this is a newly formed Committee since the previous version was drafted. Members are asked to approve the relevant responsibilities as set out at **Appendix 1**.
17. Another area of review is the change in frequency of the reporting against Prudential indicators as detailed in the revised Prudential Code 2021. Currently there is only a requirement to report every 6 months to members through the annual and mid-year report. The proposed changes require the Prudential Indicators to be monitored and reported on quarterly from 2023/24 although it does not specify where the Prudential Indicators are to be reported quarterly. We have sought clarification from CIPFA on the quarterly reporting requirement as our current meeting timetable does not allow for quarterly reporting. As such, we have been advised that it is sufficient for an Authority of our size to report the Prudential Indicators to Corporate Management Board as part of the quarterly revenue and capital budget monitoring, alongside reporting a mid-year and final outturn report to the Audit and Governance committee. However, the Code now requires that the full Authority also receives the mid-year and final outturn too, alongside the Prudential Indicators, so the revised reporting requirements are now set out in the TMP 6 - Reporting Requirements, attached at **Appendix 2** and recommended to the Authority for approval by the Audit and Governance Committee.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

15. All financial implications associated with servicing the Authority's loans are able to be contained within the overall budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

16. Members are requested to approve the following recommendations, as proposed by Audit and Governance Committee.
 - 16.1 Approve the mid-year report on Treasury Management activity for 2022/23.
 - 16.2 Approve the roles and responsibilities of Officers and Members in the Treasury process, (paragraph 16 and **Appendix 1** refers).
 - 16.3 Approve the revised reporting requirements of the Prudential Indicators, (paragraph 17 and **Appendix 2** refers).

TMP 5 - Organisation, Clarity and Segregation of Responsibilities and Dealing Arrangements

5.1 Allocation of responsibilities

Chief Executive

- Opening and closing of bank accounts (with one other authorised Director)

Director of Finance and Corporate Services (DFCS)

- Opening and closing of bank accounts (with CE or one other authorised Director)
- Responsibility for day-to-day treasury management activities and the delegation of finance officers to undertake the function
- Ensuring the adequacy of treasury management resources, skills and the division of responsibilities within the treasury management function
- Arrangement of loans or overdraft facilities
- Agreeing equipment or vehicle leases for 5 years or less
- Negotiating and managing and signing Treasury Management Contracts
- Ensuring the adequacy of internal audit and liaising with external audit

Director of Prevention, Protection and Customer Engagement

- Opening and closing of bank accounts (with CE or one other authorised Director)

Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions (in the absence of the DFCS)

- Responsibility for day-to-day treasury management activities in accordance with the agreed Treasury Management Strategy
- Arrangement of loans or overdraft facilities in accordance with the agreed Treasury Management Strategy
- In the absence of the DFCS, agreeing Equipment or vehicle leases for 5 years duration or less
- Negotiating and managing and signing Treasury Management Contracts

(i) Full Authority

- receiving and reviewing reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities
- approval of annual treasury management strategy
- approval of capital strategy
- approval of leases over 5 years

(ii) Audit and Governance Committee

- approval of amendments to the organisation's adopted clauses, treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices
- approval of the division of responsibilities
- receiving and reviewing regular monitoring reports and acting on recommendations
- approving the selection of external service providers and agreeing terms of appointment.
- reviewing the treasury management policy and procedures and making recommendations to the Full Authority.

TMP 6 -Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements

6.1 Annual programme of reporting

- a) Annual reporting requirements before the start of the year: -
 - review of the organisation's approved clauses, treasury management policy statement and practices
 - **Treasury Management Strategy** on proposed treasury management activities for the year comprising of the Treasury management strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy
 - **Capital Strategy** to cover the following: -
 - i. give a long-term view of the capital programme and treasury management implications thereof beyond the three-year time horizon for detailed planning.
 - ii. an overview of treasury and non-treasury investments to highlight the risks and returns involved in each and the balance, (proportionality), between both types of investments.
 - iii. The authority's risk appetite
- b) Mid-year review (*or more frequent*)
- c) Quarterly monitoring or review (*paragraphs 43 and 44 of the Prudential Code*)
- d) Annual review report after the end of the year

6.2 Annual Treasury Management Strategy

1. The Treasury Management Strategy sets out the specific expected treasury activities for the forthcoming financial year. This Strategy is presented to the Audit and Governance for their review and consideration, and once agreed is then recommended to the full Authority for approval and adoption, before the start of each financial year.
2. The formulation of the annual Treasury Management Strategy involves determining the appropriate borrowing and investment decisions in the light of the anticipated movement in both fixed and shorter-term variable interest rates. For instance, this Authority may decide to postpone borrowing if fixed interest rates are expected to fall or borrow early if fixed interest rates are expected to rise.
3. The Treasury Management Strategy is concerned with the following elements:
 - a) Prudential and Treasury Indicators
 - b) current Treasury portfolio position
 - c) borrowing requirement
 - d) prospects for interest rates
 - e) borrowing strategy
 - f) policy on borrowing in advance of need
 - g) debt rescheduling
 - h) investment strategy

- i) creditworthiness policy
 - j) policy on the use of external service providers
 - k) any extraordinary treasury issue
 - l) the MRP strategy
4. The Treasury Management Strategy will establish the expected move in interest rates against alternatives (using all available information such as published interest rate forecasts where applicable) and highlight sensitivities to different scenarios.

6.3 The Annual Investment Strategy

As part of the above process the Authority also receives the Annual Investment Strategy (having previously been considered by the Audit and Governance committee) which will set out the following: -

- a) The Authority's risk appetite in respect of security, liquidity, and optimum performance
- b) The definition of high credit quality to determine what are specified investments as distinct from non-specified investments
- c) Which specified and non-specified instruments the Authority will use
- d) Whether they will be used by the in-house team, external managers, or both (if applicable)
- e) The Authority's policy on the use of credit ratings and other credit risk analysis techniques to determine creditworthy counterparties for its approved lending list
- f) Which credit rating agencies the Authority will use
- g) How the Authority will deal with changes in ratings, rating watches and rating outlooks
- h) Limits of value and time for individual counterparties and groups
- i) Country limits
- j) Maximum value and maximum periods for which funds may be prudently invested
- k) Levels of cash balances and investments over the same time period (as a minimum) as the authority's capital investment plans and how the use of internal borrowing and borrowing in advance will influence those levels
- l) Interest rate outlook
- m) Budget for investment earnings
- n) A review of the holding of longer-term investments
- o) Policy on the use of external service providers

6.4 The Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement

This statement will set out how the Authority will make revenue provision for repayment of its borrowing using the four options for so doing and will be submitted through the same process as the Annual Treasury Management Strategy.

6.5 Policy on Prudential and Treasury Indicators

1. The Authority approves before the beginning of each financial year a number of treasury limits which are set through Prudential and Treasury Indicators.
2. The responsible officer is responsible for incorporating these limits into the Annual Treasury Management Strategy, and for ensuring compliance with the limits. Should it prove necessary to amend these limits, the responsible officer shall submit the changes for approval to the Full Authority.

6.6 Quarterly and Mid-year reviews

The Authority will review its treasury management activities and strategy on a six monthly basis. The mid-year review will go to Audit and Governance for review and then on to Full Authority. This review will consider the following: -

- a) activities undertaken
- b) variations (if any) from agreed policies/practices
- c) interim performance report
- d) regular monitoring
- e) monitoring of treasury management and prudential indicators

The quarterly review by Corporate Management Board (CMB) will monitor the treasury management and prudential indicators as part of the authority's general revenue and capital monitoring reporting.

6.7 Annual Review Report on Treasury Management Activity

An annual report will be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee at the earliest practicable meeting after the end of the financial year, but in any case, by the end of September. Subsequent to that report being reviewed, it will then be presented to the next Full Authority meeting after the Audit and Governance committee. This report will include the following: -

- a) transactions executed and their revenue (current) effects
- b) report on risk implications of decisions taken and transactions executed
- c) compliance report on agreed policies and practices, and on statutory/regulatory requirements
- d) performance report
- e) report on compliance with CIPFA Code recommendations, approved policies and practices, the member approved treasury management strategy and on statutory/regulatory requirements
- f) monitoring of treasury management indicators

6.8 Management Information Reports

Management information reports will be prepared quarterly and will be presented to the Corporate Management Board.

These reports will contain the following information: -

- a) a summary of transactions executed and their revenue (current effects)
- b) measurements of performance including effect on loan charges/investment income
- c) degree of compliance with original strategy and explanation of variances.
- d) any non-compliance with Prudential limits or other treasury management limits.

6.9 Publication of Treasury Management Reports

The Authority's Treasury Management Reports will be available to view on the Intranet within the relevant meeting papers.

By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 13 October 2022

Subject: PROPOSED CALENDAR OF MEMBER MEETINGS AND OTHER
EVENTS FOR 2023/24

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

This report sets out for Members' consideration and approval, the proposed Calendar of Member Meetings and Other Events for 2023/24.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the proposed Calendar of Member Meetings for 2023/24 as set out in **Appendix 1** (paragraphs 2 and 3 refers).

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

COMMENTS

Introduction

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

Member Meetings for the Remainder of 2022/23 Calendar Year

2. In October 2021 (Minute 30), the Authority set and agreed the dates for its meetings for the remainder of the current Authority year (through to the Annual Meeting in June 2023). Members are required to note the existing calendar of dates which are identified in Part 1 of **Appendix 1**.

Proposed Meeting Dates for 2023/24

3. Suggested dates for the proposed Authority and Audit and Governance Committee meetings from June 2023 until June 2024 are shown in Part 2 of **Appendix 1** for Members' consideration and approval.
4. All currently known dates which have an influence on the meetings programme (such as local elections, LGA Conferences, and annual meetings of the constituent authorities) are also shown where known.
5. The suggested dates for 2023/24 follow a similar pattern to that adopted for 2022/23, avoiding school holiday periods as far as reasonably possible.
6. As usual, in drawing up the proposed calendar of meetings, discussions have taken place with relevant officers at both Kent County Council and Medway Council to try to avoid any significant date clashes. As it is often necessary for the constituent Councils to call meetings at short notice, it is inevitable that clashes will occur from time to time, despite the best efforts of all parties.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

RECOMMENDATION

8. Members are requested to:
 - 8.1 Approve the proposed Calendar of Member Meetings for 2023/24 as set out in **Appendix 1** (paragraphs 2 and 3 refers).

PROPOSED CALENDAR OF MEMBER MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS 2022/23

Part 1: Dates for remainder 2022/23- Previously Approved by the Authority at its meeting on 14 October 2021

2022

Audit and Governance Committee	Monday 28 th November at 10.30am
	(Was previously Thursday 1st December)

2023

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority Budget Meeting	Tuesday 21 st February at 10.30am
---	--

<i>LGA Annual Fire Conference</i>	<i>TBC</i>
---------------------------------------	------------

Audit and Governance Committee	Thursday 20 th April at 10.30am
--------------------------------	--

<i>Medway Council Elections</i>	<i>Thursday 4th May 2023</i>
---------------------------------	---

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Meeting	Thursday 29 th June at 10.30am
---	---

<i>LGA General Assembly and Annual Conference</i>	<i>Tuesday 4 – Thursday 6 July</i>
---	------------------------------------

Part 2: Proposed Dates – for Approval

Audit and Governance Committee	Thursday 28 th September at 10.30am
--------------------------------	--

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority	Thursday 19 th October at 10.30am
---	--

Audit and Governance Committee	Tuesday 5 th December at 10.30am
--------------------------------	---

2024

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority Budget Meeting	Tuesday 20 th February at 10.30am
---	--

<i>LGA Annual Fire Conference</i>	<i>TBC</i>
---------------------------------------	------------

Audit and Governance Committee	Thursday 25 th April at 10.30am
--------------------------------	--

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Meeting	Thursday 4 th July at 10.30am
---	--

This page has been left blank

By: Chair of Audit and Governance Committee

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 13 October 2022

Subject: CHAIR OF AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE'S
REPORT TO THE AUTHORITY

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR INFORMATION

SUMMARY

The first meeting of the newly formed Audit and Governance Committee took place on the 25 November 2021. Since that time Members of the Audit and Governance Committee have received specialist training and presentations to not only enhance their understanding and knowledge but to also support them in gaining assurance in the breadth of issues within the remit of this Committee. A number of reports have been reviewed and recommendations made. This report provides a summary of the activities undertaken and demonstrates to the Authority the effectiveness of the Committee in assessing and maintaining the organisation's internal control environment and governance arrangements.

CONCLUSION

Members are requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Director, Finance and Corporate Services – Alison Kilpatrick
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext 8262
EMAIL: alison.kilpatrick@kent.fire-uk.org
BACKGROUND PAPERS:

COMMENTS

Background

1. Members will recall that at the February 2021 meeting of the Authority, it was agreed that an Audit and Governance Committee would be established to help support and enhance all the key aspects of good governance. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) provides clear guidance and a Position Statement on the function and operation of Audit Committees alongside recommended best practice.
2. Audit Committees are a key component of any authority's governance framework and are there to provide an independent and high-level resource to support good governance and strong public financial management. It also provides independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes. By overseeing internal and external audit, it makes an important contribution to ensuring that effective assurance arrangements are in place.
3. This annual report of the Committee covers the period from November 2021 to September 2022, during which there have been three meetings held. The meetings are essentially timed around key aspects of work that are to be reviewed in a financial year, hence the meetings have been held in November, April and September and as such cover these main areas of activity: Governance, Risk and Control, Internal Audit, External Audit, Financial Reporting.

Audit and Governance Committee

4. The Committee consists of eleven members and are independent from the Full Authority, meeting three times a year. Mr Vince Maple is the presiding Chair with Mr Stuart Tranter Vice Chair. The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Director of Prevention, Protection Customer Safety and Engagement, Assistant Director of Response, External and Internal Auditors are invited to all Committee meetings.
5. Training is an essential element for an Audit Committee. This year the Committee has received two presentations from Link Asset Group, the Authority's Treasury advisors, which covered the latest economic update, provided an overview and benchmarking of the Treasury functions of the Authority and an update on new regulations. Further training has also been provided by ALARM Risk Management on the role of Audit Committees in risk management and how this could be undertaken.
6. The Chair of the Committee has attended a CIPFA briefing for Audit and Governance Chairs which provided training on key and emerging issues within the Public Sector.

7. The Committee has developed a structured work programme which maps out its activities on an annual basis.

Governance, Risk and Control

8. Members of the Audit and Governance Committee have received and reviewed two reports on the Corporate Risk Register. A review of the information provided enabled consideration of all the identified Corporate Risks, which lead to the request for additional information to be provided in relation to the likelihood and impact of the risks identified. Consequently, Members now receive an enhanced report which incorporates this information, which Members have found helpful.
9. Members continue to monitor and review the progress made against the identified risk actions and are pleased to report that progress has been such that, at the last November meeting a number of Corporate Risks now have mitigating measures in place and have therefore been removed from the Corporate Risk Register, reducing the number of corporate risks down from 22 to 14. However, it has also considered new emerging risks, such as "Cyber Security".
10. The Committee review the Treasury Reports of the Authority and have received a benchmarking presentation from Richard Bason at Link Asset Group which gave assurance that the investments of the Authority were within acceptable risk profiles in comparison with other Fire Authorities and the debt profile of the Authority was in a better position than most comparators'.
11. A full review of the Authority's Anti-Fraud and Corruption framework, Fraud and Corruption Plan and Fraud response plan has been undertaken by the Committee. This year officers completed the "Fighting Fraud Corruption Locally" checklist in line with best practice to give further clarity of the controls and measures in place within the Authority. This has been a new addition to the previous documentation provided to give assurance of the control measures in place and has been reviewed by the Counter Fraud Specialists at Kent County Council (KCC).
12. The Authority is required to formally review its governance arrangements annually and the Audit and Governance Committee carries out this work on its behalf. This is achieved by the production of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

Internal Audit

13. The Internal Audit Service is provided by Kent County Council and the Committee oversees the work undertaken. At the beginning of the year the Committee approved

the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 which set out the individual audits to be carried out during the financial year.

14. Performance against the plan is monitored through progress reports provided to each meeting, with a verbal update provided by the Internal Audit Manager, who attends the committee meetings. The Annual Report for 2021/22 was presented to the November Audit and Governance Committee for review and consideration.

External Audit

15. The Audit Committee receives and approves the external auditor's Annual Audit Plan, which includes the proposed fee and work programme by Grant Thornton, based on the initial fees set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (the independent company set up by Government to oversee the procurement process). This was presented and reviewed at the April 2022 meeting of this Committee.
16. In order to assist with the External Audit Risk Assessment, it is now a requirement for Officers to provide details of processes around, Fraud, compliance with Laws and Regulations, related parties, an assessment of the Authority as a "Going Concern" and the Authority's accounting estimates. This document was reviewed at the April meeting of this Committee.
17. During the course of the year after the Audit has been completed sometime in October, it is expected that the November meeting of this Committee will also receive the Audit Findings Report from Grant Thornton.

Financial Reporting

18. The Committee has received and considered the draft Financial Statements for 2021/22 as approved by the Director, Finance and Corporate Services. A shorter Summary version of the Statements was also provided alongside a presentation of the key areas by officers of the Authority.

Effectiveness of the Audit and Governance Committee

19. This is the first year of the newly formed Audit and Governance Committee during which specialist knowledge has continued to grow and develop supported by the training that has been provided. This has enabled the Committee to focus in more detail on areas of activity within the remit of this committee and enables the Authority to demonstrate that it applies relevant guidance to aid best practice.

20. This report has provided a summary of the work completed over the last twelve months, indicating that it is functioning in accordance with best practice and providing independent assurance of the Authority's governance arrangements.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

21. This update provides further assurance for Members that the Authority has robust governance arrangements in place.

CONCLUSION

22. Members are requested to:

- 22.1 Note the contents of the report.

This page has been left blank

By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 13 October 2022

Subject: INFORMATION UPDATE

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR INFORMATION

SUMMARY

This information update covers the following topics:

- A.** The Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (paragraphs 1 to 2 refer).
- B.** Inspection Update (paragraphs 3 to 8 refer).
- C.** Performance Update (paragraphs 9 to 21 refer).
- D.** Response and Resilience Update (paragraphs 22 to 41 refer).
- E.** Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update (paragraphs 42 to 71 refer).
- F.** Annual Update on Members' Standards and Allowances (paragraph 72 to 76 and **Appendix 1** refers).
- G.** Freedom of Information update (paragraphs 77 to 83 refer).
- H.** Pensions and Pensions Board Update (paragraph 84 and **Appendix 2** refers).

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. The Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

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

1. The nation was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022. On confirmation of the news, both the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Authority offered the Royal Family the Authority's condolences. The Chair of the Authority and the Chief Executive attended the Proclamation hosted in Maidstone by Kent County Council. Attendance was made by officers at all other proclamation ceremonies held across Kent and Medway. Flags at all establishments were flown in line with national guidance.
2. In accordance with protocol, a letter from the Authority has been sent to His Majesty King Charles III. This both expresses the Authority's condolences on the death of The Queen and offers our warmest wishes on His Majesty's accession to the throne as our new Sovereign.

B. Inspection and National Issues Update

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

3. **Ministerial issues:** The Right Honourable Suella Braverman QC MP has been appointed Home Secretary by the new Prime Minister. Jeremy Quin MP has been confirmed as Minister of State for Fire and Police.
4. **Inspection hot debrief:** On 10 August the Authority received its "hot debrief" following the recent inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services. The debrief only gave headlines, as during the process His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services has collected more than 1400 pieces of evidence about what they found, all of which needs reviewing and processing.
5. Whilst the Inspectorate wouldn't give any indication of scores for each assessment area, they highlighted the really good work they have seen across all teams, and especially the complete focus on the customer experience, and the progress made in equality, diversity and inclusion issues. They were impressed with changes made to how we keep business and special risk sites safe by gathering information about them, and how we keep people safe through customer safety work.
6. Inspectors were keen to express their thanks for the warm welcome they had received wherever they had visited or whoever they had online sessions with, be it with firefighters, customer safety colleagues, or corporate teams.

7. **Timeline for report:** it is anticipated that the final report will be made available by the end of 2022 or early 2023. At a similar time, the national State of Fire report will be published. Both reports will be considered by Members at a future meeting.
8. **National industrial relations update:** Members will no doubt be aware that the Fire Brigades' Union has announced its intention to ballot its membership for strike action on the grounds of pay. A verbal update on the current position and the mitigations the Authority has in place should strike action of any kind be taken can be provided at the meeting.

C. Performance Update

Lead/Contact Officer: James Finch - Assistant Director, Corporate Services

Tel: 01622 692121 ext 8453, james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org

Summary of Performance

9. This update provides Members with an overview of the Authority's performance between April and August 2022/23 as well as performance against the three-year average targets for the period 2021-24.
10. So far this year 21,910 emergency calls were received in the Authority's control room which is considerably higher than levels seen in the previous year. For the same period in the previous year 15,042 calls had been received. The Authority has attended 3,194 fires so far this year which is also considerably higher than the same period the previous year (46% increase). The three-year average projection for the 2021-24 period is 4,728 which is higher than the target of 4,210.
11. Members will be aware that summer has been incredibly busy for the Authority with unprecedented numbers of outdoor and rubbish fires and wildfires. These incidents account for 70% of all the fires attended so far this year. The exceptionally dry and hot weather has undoubtedly increased the number of incidents to record levels. For context, on 19 July during the red weather warning for extreme temperatures, the Authority attended 61 fires throughout the day. The months of July and August had double the number of fires than the individual months of April through June. Those two months account for 55% of all fires so far this year.
12. Accidental fires accounted for 62% of the total fires attended so far this financial year and, as a result of these fires, one person has died and 38 people have suffered fire related injuries. There has also been one serious injury and 16 slight injuries reported as a result of deliberate fires this year.
13. In recent years the Authority has reported the lowest ever number of accidental fires in the home. So far this year 249 incidents have been attended which is higher than the levels seen in the previous years. The current projection for the medium-term period (2021-24) is 565 which is 6.2% higher than the target of 532.

14. The Authority has attended 451 road traffic collisions so far this financial year which is higher than the same period in the previous year (405). As a result of these incidents nine people have died and 58 have been seriously injured.
15. So far this year 65.8% of life-threatening incidents were reached within 10 minutes and 77.3% within 12 minutes. Overall performance is lower than the targets set for these indicators. Performance on response times met target in May but has not met target for the other months so far this year. A higher proportion of life threatening incidents were in on-call areas which we would not expect that response times could be reached routinely. Further investigations are continuing to identify the causes of these.
16. The Authority attended life-threatening fire incidents within 10 minutes on 68.8% occasions whilst life-threatening road traffic collisions were reached within 10 minutes on 55.0% of occasions. Non-life threatening incidents were attended within 15 minutes on 87.2% of occasions.
17. The Authority's Customer Safety team has delivered 4,571 Safe and Well Visits to customers across Kent and Medway so far this year. In addition to these visits, 2,680 Home Safety Visits have been carried out by on duty crews and the Home Safety Visit Taskforce.
18. Building consultations received (936) have been completed within 21 days on 97% of occasions so far this year. Business Safety teams have also carried out 626 audits of business premises so far this year in line with the Authority's risk based inspection programme.
19. 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 47 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.
20. So far this year, 4.95% of all contracted hours have been lost due to sickness. Operational staff have lost 5.57% of contracted hours to sickness and corporate teams staff have lost 3.38%.
21. **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 seven RIDDOR-reportable injuries have been recorded. Further information on improvements to health and safety are also noted later in the report.

D. Response and Resilience Update

Lead/Contact Officer: Mark Rist - Director, Response and Resilience

Tel: 01622 692121 ext 8231, mark.rist@kent.fire-uk.org

Recent Incidents of Interest

22. There have been a number of significant recent incidents, most notably those resulting from the prolonged heatwave over the summer, which are brought to Members' attention and cover the period from June to the time of writing.
23. The period from January to August 2022 was the UK's warmest year on record. The summer was unprecedented, being the warmest and driest since the heatwave of 1976. It also marked the first time that a temperature exceeding 40°C (104°F) has been recorded in the UK, with a peak temperature of 40.3°C (104.54°F) registered at Coningsby, Lincolnshire on 19 July. The heat resulted in the Met Office issuing its longest-range Amber warning ever, with a lead time of six days and a subsequent red warning for extreme heat; the first such one to be issued. This period was characterised by a record number of fires, principally outdoor and rubbish fires and wildfires. Due to the size of some of these outdoor fires, several required a significant number of resources and personnel in order to be dealt with, however, throughout this whole period the Authority was able to respond to and deal effectively with all of these large fires. Moreover, the firefighters undertook their duties with skill, dedication and compassion in the face of record-breaking temperatures, which made their working environment and conditions even more challenging than usual. A selection of the most notable incidents is provided below for Members' information.
24. **Outdoor fire, Ifield, Gravesend – initial call 18.45 hrs 10/07/2022:** Firefighters were called to approximately 1 hectare (2.47 acres and approximately the size of Trafalgar Square) of cut corn alight. There were several seats of fire and a fast-moving wall of flames 1 to 2 metres high on each flank. A rendezvous point was set up at a nearby church and the Authority's Command Support Unit (mobile command centre) was put in place. Firefighters used beaters and hoses to fight the fire. The farm workers onsite moved a combine harvester out of the field and then, under the firefighters' direction, used a tractor, a plough and an excavator to help make a firebreak. This incident was sectorised and resources were steadily and proportionately increased as the fire escalated. Nearby properties were evacuated by Kent Police and crews worked to ensure that these properties were protected from the fire. This incident saw very effective use of the Authority's drone, which was of great benefit in co-ordinating the response and monitoring fire spread over such a large area. In addition, the six-wheeled all-terrain vehicle and Mercedes Unimog were deployed and proved most effective in being to cross the uneven terrain to get to this incident and provide fire fogging capability (a type of high pressure hose that is effective in dealing with outdoor fires). At its peak this incident had 19 fire engines, 13 specialist vehicles and 10 officers in attendance and was brought to a conclusion at 00.46 hrs on 11 July almost exactly six hours after the initial call. Once the fire had been extinguished, four fire engines remained on-site to monitor and deal with any potential hot spots. In terms of

the cause of the fire, it was believed to have been accidental as there was no evidence to suggest any deliberate ignition, but, as with many fires of this type, it was difficult to determine the exact cause. However, as it was a very hot day and the corn field was being worked and cut by a combine harvester, plus with other farm vehicles present, the fire could have started from hot exhaust from a vehicle.

25. **Outdoor fire, Durrell Dene, Dartford – initial call 11.54 hrs 19/07/2022:** This was an even larger fire, which resulted in approximately 1,000 hectares (4 square miles) of heathland, grassland and marshland being destroyed. The large scale of the incident resulted in firefighting operations taking place over a period of seven days, with the incident being closed on the morning of 27 July. Due to the large burn area and extensive damage, it was not possible to determine the cause of this incident. This was one of the most resource-intensive incidents that the Authority faced this summer, with a total of 21 fire engines, 12 specialist vehicles and 14 officers being in attendance in the first 48 hours at the peak of the incident. Once again, highly effective use was made of the Authority's drone, and its off-road vehicles with fogging units. The capabilities offered by this combination of resources allowed the firefighters and incident commanders to keep the incident under control and ensure that the fire did not spread to any of the houses or other properties in this area, nor did it force the closure of major roads. The Authority's flexible resourcing model and associated ability to move resources in response to demand, meant that it was possible to bring in additional resources whilst ensuring cover was maintained at critical sites across Kent and Medway.
26. **Outdoor fire, Rochester Way, Dartford – initial call 12.35 hrs 19/07/2022:** This incident was a large wildfire burning on multiple fronts. An immediate concern was the fact that the fire was adjacent to the carriageway of the A2. This was observed by incident commanders to be a large wind-driven fire which was spreading rapidly. As a result of this by the afternoon of the first day, this was declared a 'major incident'. Attendance was promptly increased to 10 and then 12 fire engines, supported by nine officers and three specialist vehicles, one of which included the Authority's drone. Consequently, firefighters quickly put in place a well-rehearsed operational plan, surrounding the incident and using hoses and beaters to extinguish the fire. The size of the area and large number of hotspots, all of which needed to be identified and extinguished, required the Authority to be in attendance for a total of two days following the initial call. As a precautionary measure further visits were also undertaken over the following days to ensure no resurgence of the fire. There was no evidence to suggest that this fire had been deliberately set, so the cause was recorded as accidental. As well as partner agencies such as the police, SECAmb's Hazardous Area Response Team and Kent Search and Rescue, thanks also go to the Salvation Army who provided food and refreshments to the large numbers of firefighters who were in attendance at this incident.
27. **Fire in commercial premises, Whitstable Harbour – initial call 13.34 hrs 26/05/2022:** Although this incident dates back to late May, it was not covered in the incidents of interest report presented to the previous meeting of the Authority due to it

occurring just outside of the cut-off date. It has been included within this update for Members' information as it was a significant and well-publicised incident. This was a large fire in an industrial building measuring approximately 25m by 100m and located at Whitstable harbour. The fire started in a part of the building that was a disused former cockle shed, from where it then spread to an adjoining restaurant (The Crab and Winkle) and fish market. Upon firefighters' arrival, the first floor and roof of the cockle shed were well alight, with flames and large volumes of smoke issuing from the building. Such was the intensity of the fire and speed with which it spread, that resources were steadily increased to a total of 13 fire engines, 8 specialist vehicles and 10 officers. Whilst it was not possible to save the former cockle shed, firefighters worked hard to successfully minimise the spread of the fire into the restaurant and fish market and, whilst the interior of the restaurant suffered considerable damage, they saved the main structure from being destroyed by the fire. The challenges faced by firefighters at this particular incident included the rapid spread of the fire and the very real risk of the collapse of the cockle shed. On this occasion the ability to undertake a fire investigation was curtailed due to access limitations and the presence of asbestos at the site. However, information gathered at the scene indicated that the fire was most likely caused by sparks from a building contractor's grinder coming into contact with the external wall and igniting combustible items within the vicinity.

28. Fire in industrial premises, Chatham Docks – initial call 02.51 hrs 25/06/2022:

This was a call to Chatham Docks to attend a fire in a warehouse measuring approximately 80m by 30m and containing recycled materials. Upon arrival, firefighters reported a fully developed fire to the rear of the property which had breached the roof and was spreading to neighbouring industrial units. Resources were quickly increased to include a bulk water carrier, a height vehicle and 12 fire engines. In addition, a high volume pump was mobilised; this was then set into the dock and used to deliver large volumes of water onto the fire. The firefighters sectorised the incident into two sectors in order to try and stop the fire spreading to the rear of the warehouse and to a neighbouring workshop which contained acetylene cylinders. Several light goods vehicles in the immediate area were moved by on site workers and firefighters then forced entry to workshop to remove the acetylene cylinders. A combination of tier one fire scene investigation, initial attendance accounts and CCTV confirmed that the most likely area of origin of the fire was within the building, as opposed to having occurred externally. Signs of electrical cable damage were observed at the scene, and it was reported that there had been a history of electrical failures at the site.

- 29. Major incident, water supply loss, Isle of Sheppey – 12/07/2022:** Two large leaks on the main pipe taking water onto the Isle of Sheppey resulted in a complete loss of water to the island and its 40,000 residents for a period of approximately 48 hours. Whilst supporting Swale Borough Council in its declaration of a 'major incident' and its associated efforts to offer assistance to residents, visitors, businesses and public infrastructure on the island, the Authority also acted quickly to mitigate the increased risk caused by the loss of water supply to all of the island's fire hydrants by moving a number of firefighting resources to Sheppey for the duration of the water outage.

30. **House fire, Longfield – initial call 01.27 hrs 21/07/2022:** Firefighters attended a call to a fire in a domestic garage. Upon their arrival it was apparent that there was a well-developed fire in the internal area of a double garage which had been converted into a workshop/storage area. The fire was almost breaking through the roof and thermal scans indicated a particularly high heat output. Being mindful of the garage's close proximity to a domestic dwelling, firefighters quickly located the property owners, alerted them to the incident and escorted them to safety (the 999 originated from one of the neighbours and the owners were unaware of the fire). Information gathered from the property owner confirmed that there were acetylene and oxygen cylinders in the garage. Due to the increased risks this presented, firefighters were unable to enter the garage and so had to amend their tactics accordingly. Consequently, they used specialist foam combined with the 'fog spike' misting system to fight the fire whilst remaining outside the garage. This allowed them to rapidly extinguish the fire within the garage and, following that, set up a ground monitor (a type of high capacity water jet) to cool the acetylene and oxygen cylinders in the garage. Following this firefighters were withdrawn from the risk area. An evacuation plan for residents was also implemented with assistance from the police, local authority, and the Authority's Volunteer Response Team. After an appropriate time, a specialist officer and firefighters in breathing apparatus entered the rear door of the garage to conduct an internal survey. Once the contents of the cylinders were confirmed to be in a chemically stable state and then deemed safe, residents were cleared to return to their homes and responsibility of garage handed back to the property owner. The cause of the fire was determined to be accidental, with the burn pattern evidence suggesting that the fire had started in the fridge freezer in the garage.
31. **Road traffic collision, Fatality / Entrapment, Leopold Street, Ramsgate – Initial time of call 21:37 hrs on 10/08/2022:** Four fire engines and two officers attended an incident in which a car mounted the pavement at speed and hit five members of the same family, killing a woman in her 30s and a man in his 80s. In addition, a young girl was seriously injured, and a man in his 40s and a boy of primary school age suffered minor injuries. Upon arrival at the scene, firefighters worked to rapidly free those who had been trapped by the car, as well as supporting SECamb with providing medical assistance and screening for the incident. The driver of the vehicle was arrested shortly after the incident and later charged with two counts of causing death by dangerous driving, two counts of causing serious injury by dangerous driving and assault occasioning actual bodily harm. A trial date has been set for November.

Co-responding update

32. The Authority continues to respond to emergency medical incidents on behalf of the ambulance service, when we are the closest available resource with the right skills to provide an initial medical intervention. All calls are also mobilised to by SECamb personnel. In the most recent reporting period 326 calls have been attended, and 164 were subsequently removed to hospital by ambulance. Sadly one person was deceased on arrival, and seven died during whilst colleagues were supporting

SECAmb. Three returns of spontaneous circulation were achieved by our teams giving those patients the best possible chance of making a full recovery.

33. **Patient, casualty and manual handling training:** A core part of the Authority's operational response is supporting colleagues from SECAmb to lift and move patients/casualties in what are now known as 'complex lift incidents'. The Authority has recognised the hazards and risks to our crew members whilst attending such incidents. Following a number of accident investigations related to back injuries, earlier this year an interim measure was put in place in which a Level 2 officer is mobilised to complex lift incidents to provide an additional level of support and supervision for the attending firefighters. This measure has been successful in reducing the number of accidents being reported by firefighters.
34. However, as the Authority wants to further reduce the risk for all colleagues who attend these sorts of incidents, we have invested in training 46 colleagues as manual handling trainers. Following this training, 24 colleagues will receive a patient handling trainer qualification. Our aim is to incorporate good manual and patient/casualty handling into all of our operational training courses, so that it becomes business as normal for our firefighters. In the interim, in order to ensure all operational colleagues have the necessary skills and knowledge, the Authority will be providing a mandatory one-day course for all firefighters.

Operational Learning update

35. Members will be aware of the Authority's sector leading approach to operational learning, which has been shared nationwide and adopted by a number of other fire and rescue services across the United Kingdom. In this reporting period, 158 learning actions from incident de-briefs have been captured and seven structured debriefs of larger more complex incidents have been completed, with a further six in progress.

Technical Training and Professionalism

36. Members will also be aware of the continued investment made by the Authority into the core skills of all operational colleagues. For an example of the scale of this investment, Members may be interested to note the following examples of the investment members have supported being put into action.
- A transferee course for firefighters has been held with three delegates
 - An on-call to whole-time firefighter migration course has been held with 17 delegates
 - An initial course for new on-call firefighters with 8 delegates has been held
 - 51 colleagues attended incident command courses
 - 92 colleagues attended breathing apparatus courses
 - 43 colleagues attended marine firefighting courses
 - 19 colleagues attended an initial road traffic collision skills course
 - 81 colleagues attended water safety/rescue courses
 - 48 colleagues attended blue light driving courses

- 286 colleagues attended Intermediate emergency care courses

Fleet and Equipment Services update

37. The Fleet and Equipment Services team has been extremely busy maintaining our vehicles, operational equipment and ensuring the provision of consumable supplies such as foam concentrate. The unprecedented wildfires this summer placed a heavy demand on our fleet and equipment which in turn led to a surge in maintenance issues; for example, service schedules have had to be significantly reduced to address the impact of smoke and dust on air filters to protect our modern turbo charged engines. As a result our colleagues in the fleet and equipment teams have worked many additional hours and the Services spend on service parts has increased. The financial implications of this are discussed elsewhere on this agenda.
38. Despite this heavy demand for reactive maintenance the team has continued to deliver against its business as usual objectives including the provision of new vehicles. This activity is complicated by global supply chain issues which stem from Covid and have been exacerbated by the war in the Ukraine.
39. Newer, more fuel efficient vehicles, across all our fleet are key components of our efforts to reduce the Authority's carbon foot print, as well as reducing maintenance costs through lowering the average fleet age and of course ensuring we can deliver an effective, efficient and safe service for our customers. As an example, we have just taken delivery of a new fleet of Peugeot response cars, to replace our aged fleet of Vauxhalls. Members will see the new cars rolling out across the fleet from October. A new Firebike has also been procured, with the old bike likely to be donated to another fire and rescue service.

Resilience and Business Continuity update

40. **Exercises:** A fire and rescue service not only responds to operational incidents. It plans for them too via range of desktop and practical exercises and maintains a suite of business continuity plans. During the period of July to September 2022 we have undertaken 24 exercises have been completed, of which 11 were practical, five of these were tabletop and eight professional discussions following a response assessment visit. Five of the exercises were cross border or National Resilience exercises with other Fire Services. During the same period the Authority has been involved in over 50 tactical and strategic coordination groups. These involved issues around summer traffic management, heatwaves, water supply disruption and Operation London Bridge.
41. **Hydrants:** Currently 96% of all statutory fire hydrants across Kent and Medway have been inspected within the last four years. This is up by 15% from this time last year (81%) and by 56% in the last four years (40%). This is due to improved working practices and additional inspections. In the past 12 months an additional 290 fire hydrants have been adopted by local water companies with the responsibility for

maintenance cost now sitting with the Authority. This is mostly due to new housing developments across Kent and Medway.

E. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update

Lead/Contact Officer: Jon Quinn - Director, Protection, Prevention, Customer Engagement and Safety

Tel: 01622 692121 ext 7806, jon.quinn@kent.fire-uk.org

42. 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

43. The Authority's Fire Engineering team has been supporting the National Fire Chiefs' Council to predict smoke spread and firefighters' potential exposure to contaminants when attending fires in high rise buildings. Using 3D computer modelling, the team has been sharing insights that will help inform national guidance around firefighting tactics.
44. Over the summer, the Authority started the recruitment process for new Building Safety Inspectors. The roles were marketed using a new approach, which led to 90 candidates apply and six people appointed to roles within the team.
45. The Building Safety team is preparing for the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. This includes preparing to receive and assess risk information provided by the building owners to ensure operational colleagues can effectively respond to incidents at high rise residential buildings. A further update will be provided to Members when this work is finalised.

Engagement Update

46. **Social media:** The Authority's TikTok profile continues to grow, reaching younger audiences. In the last few months our videos have been viewed by almost 3 million people - with the most popular topics being electrical safety, preventing grassfires and water safety.
47. We have also been placing a focused approach on timely safety messages on all platforms, using behaviour change techniques, to promote safety advice on topics such as grassfires, batteries and e-scooter/e-bike safety.
48. **Autumn/Winter Campaigns:** On the back of our two most recent campaigns, which focused on 'safer smoking outside' of the home and preventing accidental grass fires, we're now looking towards the darker and colder months of the year and how the Authority can help to keep people stay safe in the face of rising energy costs. 'Save Safely' has been created in response to the cost of living crisis and fuel poverty, to encourage people to save safely and reduce the risk of fires associated with finding

alternative ways of heating homes. The campaign began in September 2022 and runs to March 2023.

49. Our other campaign focuses on kitchen safety, with a key message of keeping the hob clear of flammable items, particularly tea towels. Evidence from incidents has highlighted this as a leading cause of kitchen fires. Working in collaboration with the behaviour change team, we have identified the key messages for both campaigns using customer insight, which will help us to reach the target audience. The concept of the campaign has been shaped through customer testing and focus groups within the target audience. The campaign is expected to launch from November 2022.
50. A trial will also start shortly where vinyl safety messages are installed on the bay doors at Chatham fire station. If successful, this may then be replicated at fire stations which are visible from busy roads and where there is high traffic for maximum impact.
51. **Events and Open Days:** We have successfully delivered six 'Summer Open Days' across Kent and Medway. Events were held at Ramsgate, Dover, Thames-side, Larkfield, Faversham and Rochester). Each event sold out their allocated tickets totalling an attendance of nearly 10,000 people.
52. The Authority was visibly present at most of the Pride events in Kent and Medway reaching LGBTQ+ communities. It was a powerful experience for all attendees to speak to a wide range of customers and to offer representation and demonstrate that we are a fire service that is here for everybody.
53. Our events programme for 2022 includes our Autumn Open Days during the October half-term week at a number of our smaller full-time and on-call fire stations.
54. We will review the success of the 2022 programme and making necessary adjustments and additions ahead of the launch of the programme for 2023. Planning for next year's events will involve a deeper use of data and demographics around communities to ensure Open Days help drive our strategic objectives.

Volunteers update

55. The Authority's volunteers have been busy this summer supporting the seasonal fire station Open Days and other community events, with over 55 separate activities between June and August 2022. The Volunteer Response team has also been exceptionally busy at incidents supporting customers and firefighters at 36 call outs between June and August 2022.
56. A 'buddy' scheme for new volunteers is currently being developed and will be available for the new intake of volunteers following the January 2023 recruitment campaign.

Customer Experience update

57. Providing an excellent experience for all its customers continues to be a priority for the Authority. The Customer Experience team have been working with the behaviour

change researchers on a pioneering project to really get to know the people the Authority serves. The first phase of this customer insight project, which is near completion, looked at identifying how customers can best access services by the Authority as well as their experiences when they receive a service. The information gained will be used to tailor services to provide the best possible customer service, ensuring the Authority meets the needs of everyone.

58. The team is 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 an independent research company has been undertaking research including speaking to colleagues across the organisation. A summary of the findings and actions resulting from this initial research will be provided to members for information at a future meeting.
59. The team have been working with colleagues in Fire and Rescue Control to map customer journeys. This work is being used to identify opportunities to improve systems or processes in order to fully meet customers' needs. Initially this research has been around internal customer needs, for example operational crews, and will move onto looking at calls from the public and partner agencies.
60. A new role of Customer Ambassador has been created, with 27 colleagues successfully recruited. The individuals, who undertake the role on a voluntary basis, will act as the customer's voice across the organisation, supporting a customer-centric culture. They are currently being inducted into the role and trained to use a number of tools and techniques, such as customer journey mapping, which will support projects and service improvements.
61. To support continuous improvement, it is essential that the Authority receives timely feedback directly from its customers. As reported to the Authority in July, customers are actively encouraged to provide feedback, via surveys, after a home safety visit. A similar process is currently being piloted for operational incidents and building safety. This will provide a complete picture of the primary customer services provided by the Authority. As Members would expect it will be sensitive to the nature of the incident attended.

Behaviour Change update

62. The behaviour change team has attended a number of community and taskforce events, including station open days to collect data to support the development of wider customer insight research. This has allowed colleagues to engage more proactively with groups that we may not reach via online surveys and gain greater insights to help tailor our services to customers.
63. Work has continued to support the development of equality monitoring questions as part of our drive to match services to need. The questionnaires have been rolled out as

part of a wider communications project in Building Safety and is currently being trialled with the Home Fire Safety Visit Taskforce and Safe and Well teams. This data will help us to improve existing services and ensure everyone can access our services.

64. As part of the Authority's strategy to align our education programme with the school curriculum, the behaviour change team have completed research into Key Stage 1 learning. The research will support the design of the content for our revised Primary Education sessions, which are currently in development. The next stage of research will support the review of Key Stage 2, which will begin in the coming months.

Collaboration update

65. During the summer, the Collaboration team helped to coordinate volunteers to distribute water to vulnerable residents during the Sheppey water shortage. They represented the Authority on the Vulnerable Persons and Communities Cell, working with partners to identify and distribute water to people who were in most need.
66. As part of the Medway Taskforce, the Authority, supported a Safety in Action Day at Chatham Dockyard. The team worked closely with Medway Council and Kent Police colleagues to organise a successful family day. The event taught key life-saving skills, delivering safety messages, alongside fun and engaging activities.
67. The Authority hosted this years' Asian Fire Service Association conference on 23 and 24 June 2022. More than 150 delegates from fire and rescue services across the UK attended sessions, which included presentations from Polish firefighters, the Roma community and Paralympian Millie Knight.

Customer Safety update

68. The Home Fire Safety Taskforce is now well established, offering home safety advice, installing smoke alarms in customers' homes and providing operational resilience as required. The team have focused on their home fire safety visit training and have provided additional fire engine cover during the summer. The team will help reach people the Authority has identified as being at higher risk of fire in the home.
69. The Authority continues to see a rise in the number of safeguarding cases which have been identified by colleagues across the organisation. In 2019/20, we had 243 safeguarding cases. From April to July 2022, we worked on 227 cases. To help with workloads, a number of new designated safeguarding officers are being trained to provide additional support to the team.
70. The Education team has provided support to the Medway Taskforce in taking action against a trend of deliberate fires, along with post fire engagement in the Dartford area. This work involves the team sharing messages around arson prevention and our work with Fire-stoppers to help reduce the number of deliberate fires in targeted areas.
71. As part of the Authority's drive to reach everyone with safety messaging, we have continued to deliver education sessions in schools across Kent and Medway, including

a number of bespoke sessions in Special Educational Needs schools. This is a new area of work, which has resulted in positive feedback from pupils, teachers and carers.

F. Annual Update on Members' Standards and Allowances

Lead Contact Officer: Marie Curry – Clerk to the Authority

Tel: 01622 692121 ext 8291 marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org

72. Under the Localism Act 2011, all local authorities 'must promote and maintain high standards of conduct' by their Members. In order to assist the Authority to promote and maintain high standards of Member conduct, the Authority receives an Annual Report on Standards Matters. The Authority's Independent Person (IP), Mrs Jenny Waterman has contributed to the report and will attend the meeting to co-present it.
73. **Annual Report on Standards:** It is satisfying to be able to report once again that no complaints alleging that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct have been made to the Authority during the past year. Given that the Authority has never in its history received a single allegation of misconduct by a Member, it was always expected that the formal workload of the IP was likely to be minimal, however steps are taken to ensure regular contact is maintained between the Authority and the IP. This includes an annual meeting with the Clerk to the Authority; annual attendance at this meeting and any other relevant meetings; receipt of electronic agendas for all meetings of the Authority and Audit and Governance Committee and regular email and telephone contact about Standards issues.
74. It is also worth noting that amendments to the Kent Code of Conduct are currently being considered by the Kent Secretaries Group and Kent County Council's (KCC) Standards Committee following the Local Government Association's consultation into a revision of its Model Code of Conduct for Members. The Kent Code is not only adopted by KCC but by the majority of Borough/District Councils as well as this Authority. It is the understanding that the proposed amendments are still under review and are yet to be submitted to the KCC's Full Council meeting for formal adoption. Once a decision has been reached then any proposed amendments will be given consideration by this Authority.
75. Members will recall that our IP also undertook the recent review of this Authority's Member Allowances Scheme as required by the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The outcomes of this review were reported to the Authority at its meeting in February 2022.
76. **Allowances and Expenses Paid to Members during 2021/22 financial year** - In order to meet the requirements of the 2003 Regulations, it is a legal requirement that the Authority publishes each year details of the allowances and expenses which it has paid to each of its Members during the preceding year. A schedule is attached at **Appendix 1** for Members information which lists each Member and the allowances and expenses they were paid by the Authority in accordance with its Members Allowances Scheme during the 2021/22 financial year (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022).

G. Freedom of Information Update

Lead/Contact Officer: James Finch - Assistant Director, Corporate Services

Tel: 01622 692121 ext 8453, james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org

77. 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.
78. A total of 84 Freedom of Information requests have so far been received in 2022/23 (up to and including 07/09/2022). For comparison, for the same period in 2021/22 the Authority received 88 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).
79. Four Subject Access Requests have so far been received in 2022/23 (up to and including 07/09/2022). 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).
80. **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.
81. 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).
82. 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
83. An update is brought to Members' attention as part of the Information Update Report that forms part of each agenda for the Authority. **Table 1** presents the current update for 2022/23:

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	43	41		
The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed	0	5		
The number of the received requests that were processed in full	43	36		
The number of requests where the information was granted in full	31	27		
The number of requests where the information was refused in full	1	2		
The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part	11	7		
The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review	0	0		
Number of subject access requests**	3	1		

* Q2 is currently incomplete as it covers the period from 01/07/2022 to 30/09/2022

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

H. Pensions and Pensions Board Update

Lead/Contact Officer: Mark Rist - Director, Operations (Chair of the Pension Board)
01622 692121 ext. 8959, mark.rist@kent.fire-uk.org

84. 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, an update from the last meeting of the Authority's Pension Board is attached at **Appendix 2** for Members information.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

CONCLUSION

86. Members are requested to:
- 86.1 Consider and note the contents of the report.

Members' Allowances and Travel Expenses
1 April 2021 – March 2022

KMFRA MEMBER			TRAVEL (Gross)	BASIC ALLOWANCE (Gross)	SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE (Gross)	TOTAL RECEIVED
MRS	A	ALLEN (up to June 2021)	-	£285.53	-	£285.53
MR	M	ANGELL	-	£174.73	-	£174.73
MR	P	BARRINGTON-KING (from July 2021)	£33.75	£1166.44	-	£1,200.19
MR	A	BOOTH	£32.40	£1,538.16	-	£1,570.56
MR	D	BRAZIER (up to June 2021)	-	£285.53	-	£285.53
MR	N	CHARD	-	£1,538.16	£20,170.80	£21,708.96
MR	I	CHITTENDEN (up to June 2021)	-	£260.34	-	£260.34
MR	P	COLE (from July 2021)	£51.30	£1,166.44	-	£1,217.74
MR	N	COLLOR	£40.50	£1,538.16	-	£1578.66
MS	K	CONSTANTINE (from July 2021)	-	£1,166.44	£2,850.58	£4017.02
MR	A	COOK (up to May 2021)	-	£174.73	-	£174.73
MR	D	CROW-BROWN	£150.30	£1,166.44	-	£1,316.74
MR	D	DALEY	-	£1,538.16	£1,550.72	£3,088.88

KMFRA MEMBER			MILEAGE (Gross)	BASIC ALLOWANCE (Gross)	SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE (Gross)	TOTAL RECEIVED
MS	M	DAWKINS (from July 2021)	£27.00	£1520.84	-	£1520.84
MISS	E	DAWSON (up to May 2021)	-	£174.73	-	£174.73
MR	M	DENDOR (from July 2021)	-	£1,166.44	-	£1,166.44
MR	D	FARRELL (up to May 2021)	-	£125.97	£392.48	£518.45
MR	P	HARMAN	-	£1,538.16	-	£1,538.16
MRS	S	HOHLER	£30.60	£1,538.16	-	£1,568.76
MS	S	HUDSON (from July 2021)	-	£1,166.44	-	£1,166.44
MR	D	JEFFREY (from July 2021)	-	£1,166.44	-	£1,166.44
MR	B	KEMP	-	£1,538.16	-	£1,538.16
MR	P	LAKE (up to May 2021)	-	£174.73	-	£174.73
MR	R	LOVE (from July 2021)	£100.35	£1,132.95	-	£1,233.30
MR	G	LYMER (up to May 2021)	-	£174.73	-	£174.73
MR	S	MANION	-	£1538.16	-	£1538.16
MR	V	MAPLE	-	£1,538.16	£3,277.53	£4815.69
MS	D	MARSH (up to May 2021)	-	£174.73	-	£174.73
MR	J	MCINROY	£36.90	£1,538.16	-	£1,575.06
MS	C	PARFITT-REID (from July 2021)	-	£1,166.44	-	£1,166.44

MR	A	RIDGERS	-	£1,538.16	-	£1,538.16
MR	C	SIMKINS	-	£1,538.16	-	£1,538.16
MR	B	SWEETLAND (up to June 2021)	-	£285.53	-	£285.53
MR	R	THORNE	-	£1,538.16	-	£1,538.16
MR	S	TRANTER	-	£1,538.16	£8,068.32	£9,606.48
TOTALS			£503.10	£35,810.83	£36,310.43	£72,624.36

This page has been left blank

MINUTES OF PENSION BOARD MEETING 26 SEPTEMBER 2022

Present:

Mark Rist (MR)	KFRS (Employer Representative)
Matthew Deadman (MD)	KFRS (Employer Representative)
Danny Barrett (DB)	FBU (Employee 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)

Apologies:

David Broughton (DBr)	FBU (Deputy Employee Representative)
Lawrence Pater (LP)	FOA (Employee Representative)
Karen Pointer (KP)	FOA (Deputy Employee Representative)
Dylan McEvoy (DM)	FRSA Representative (Employee Representative)
Jordan McEvoy (JM)	FRSA Representative (Deputy Employee Representative)

NEXT MEETING	Date: 19 October 2022
	Venue: MS Teams
	Time: 15.30hrs

As this meeting did not have the required number of representatives in attendance to ensure that the meeting was quorate, the decision items have been deferred to the rescheduled meeting of the Pension Board being held on 19 October 2022.

1. Declarations of Interests on Items on this Agenda

None

2. Minutes of the last Pension Board Meeting held on 10 May 2022

Item deferred until the meeting on 19 October 2022 for approval.

3. Pension Board Action Log - Update on Progress

Item deferred until the meeting on 19 October 2022.

4. LPP Monthly Report

Item deferred until the meeting on 19 October 2022.

5. Update on Cases (Standing Item)

McCloud vs Sargent Case

DS reported that the Category 1 cases are being processed by Local Pensions Partnership (LPP). He added that discussions are now taking place with LPP about the processing of Category 2 cases. However, LPP has raised some concerns which are currently being reviewed. DS will provide an update on progression at the next meeting.

O'Brien Case

DS reported that he is still awaiting release of new regulations for further guidance in relation to this case. In the meantime, any individual that has made contact has been added to a list. DS said that he will be producing a project plan over the coming weeks to address the gathering of data and how those members affected are going to be contacted. DS will provide an update on progression at the next meeting.

IDRP Cases

There are no IDRP cases to update on.

6. Administrator Remedy Self-Assessment Survey

Item deferred until the meeting on 19 October 2022.

7. Slow processing of Pension Outside of ID

Item deferred until the meeting on 19 October 2022

