



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

**Meeting of the Authority**

**Friday 5 July 2024**

**10.30am**



**AGENDA**

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**ANNUAL MEETING**

**Friday 5 July 2024 at 10.30am**

Ask for: Marie Curry  
Telephone: (01622) 692121

Held at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,  
Straw Mill Hill, Tovil, Maidstone ME15 6XB

***Membership of Authority for 2024/25:***

Appointed by Kent County Council (21):- Mr P Barrington-King, Mr D Beaney, Mr A Brady, Mr A Booth, Mr N Chard, Mr P Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr M Dendor, Mr P Harman, Ms S Hohler, Mr M Hood, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr S Manion, Mr J McInroy, Ms J Meade, Ms L Parfitt-Read, Mr A Ridgers, Mr C Simkins, Mr M Sole and Mr B Sweetland.

Appointed by Medway Council (4):- Mr B Kemp, Mr V Maple, Mr M Prenter and Ms Z Van-Dyke

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner:- Mr M Scott

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

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

**A Routine Business**

- A1. Election of Chair for 2024/25
- A2. Election of Vice-Chair for 2024/25
- A3. Chair's Announcements *(if any)*
- A4. Membership Changes and Apologies for Absence  
*To note the Membership of the Authority (as above), and to receive any apologies for absence.*
- A5. Declarations of Interest in Items on this Agenda
- A6. Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 29 January 2024 *(for information)*
- A7. Minutes of the Meeting of the Authority held on 20 February 2024 *(for approval)*
- A8. Minutes of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee for 9 April 2024 *(for information)*

**B For Decision**

- B1. Review of Proportionality and Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies for 2024/25
- B2. Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) – Delivery Plan
- B3. Governance and Policy Update
- B4. Treasury Management Year End Report 2023/24
- B5. Provisional Final Outturn for 2023/24
- B6. Financial Summary Update for 2024/25
- B7. Appointment of Independent Person
- B8. Monitoring Officer Provision

B9. Pensions Overview and Discretions (*Presentation*)

**C For Information**

C1. Activity Update (*Presentation*)

C2. Information Update (*Presentation*)

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

**E Exempt Items**

None

Marie Curry  
Clerk to the Authority

24 June 2024

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

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

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MINUTES of the Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on Monday, 29 January 2024 at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, The Godlands, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6XB.

PRESENT: - Mr A Brady, Mr P Cole, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr B Kemp, Mr M Hood, Mr V Maple, Mr C Simkins and Mrs J Waterman (Independent Member).

APOLOGIES: - Mr A Booth, Mr N Collor and Mr J McInroy

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Ms A Millington OBE, QFSM; the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Mrs A Hartley; Director Prevention, Protection and Customer Engagement, Mr J Quinn; Assistant Director, Operations, Mr M Deadman; Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions, Mrs N Walker; Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions, Mr B Fullbrook; Head of Policy, Dr O Thompson; Resilience Manager, Steven Lewis; and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: - Mr P Cuttle, Grant Thornton and Ms F Smith, Kent County Council (KCC) Internal Audit.

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### 13. Chair's Announcements

*(Item A1)*

- (1) The Chair welcomed Paul Cuttle from Grant Thornton to the meeting.
- (2) The Chair welcomed Frankie Smith from KCC Internal Audit to the meeting.

#### 14. Membership

*(Item A2)*

- (1) There have been no membership changes to the Committee since the last meeting.

#### 15. Minutes

*(Item A4)*

- (1) RESOLVED that:
  - (a) The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 27 September 2023 be signed as a true and correct record.

#### 16. Corporate Risk Register

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

- (1) The Committee considered the latest update on the Corporate Risk Register.
- (2) The Chief Executive gave an update on the proposed format of how risks will be identified and recorded in the Register in future. She explained that the Register will form two parts; Strategic Risks – risks identified that could prevent the Authority fulfilling its objectives against its strategic aims and then the Corporate Risks – these being the operational day to day risks that are identified in terms of their likelihood of occurring and their potential impact.

- (3) The Chief Executive explained that the Register will be summarised using a RAG rating system and will give Members more detail around the control measures in place. All of which will be beneficial in future for helping the Committee examine the information presented before them. The Committee will receive the Register in its new format at the next meeting.
- (4) Members discussed a new risk which has been identified in relation to the reduction of water pressure in the water networks, particularly in new development areas. This means that limited water pressure is being extracted from fire hydrants during an incident. The Resilience Manager explained that although this is a national issue, there are impacts on a number of geographical areas within Kent so has therefore been identified as a likely but critical risk for this Authority.
- (5) The Resilience Manager answered a number of questions posed by Members and also provided an update on the work the Authority is doing with local planners and water companies to try and resolve the situation.
- (6) It was agreed that a letter be sent from the Chair of A&G to the local planning authorities outlining the Authority's concerns and its willingness to engage to work collaboratively to find a resolution to the water supply issue.
- (7) The Chair asked that the Risk Register in its current form is brought back to the next meeting alongside the new format so Members can compare the two.
- (8) In relation to the discussions on other risks contained within the Register, the Chair requested that Members to be provided with a training / awareness session on Cyber Security.
- (9) RESOLVED that:
  - (a) the amendments to the Corporate Risk Register as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
  - (b) The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee writes to all local planning authorities to outline the impact and potential risks to frontline service delivery, particularly at incidents, of reduced water pressure impacting on the Authority and the need to work collaboratively to resolve, be approved.
  - (c) The contents of the report be noted.

## **17. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2024/25 – 2027/28**

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

- (1) The Committee received the draft Treasury Management Strategy for the 2024/25 financial year to consider prior to this being presented to the Authority in February 2024.
- (2) The capital and reserve figures detailed within the draft Strategy provide current estimates of forecast spend but may be subject to refinement prior to the Authority's budget meeting as projects progress or slip and as more detailed work in costing and profiling are undertaken to ensure affordability.
- (3) In response to a question raised by Mrs Waterman around what the arrangements will be for an external Treasury Management Advisor once the current contract ends in September, the Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions, Mrs Walker responded by saying that the intention will be to go out to tender but recognising the fact that there is limited provision in this market.

(4) RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for the 2024/25 financial year, be approved in principle.

**18. External Auditors Audit Findings Report for 2022/23 and Letter of Representation**

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

- (1) The Committee considered the External Auditors Audit Findings Report in relation to the 2022/23 financial year, the audit work that has been undertaken to date as well as the Letter of Representation.
- (2) Mr P Cuttle provided an update on the areas that are yet to be concluded within the Auditors review, these are detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (3) RESOLVED that:
  - (a) the matters raised within the annual Audit Findings Report for 2022/23, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, were considered and approved.
  - (b) the draft Letter of Representation in relation to the 2022/23 accounts, as attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

**19. Internal Audit Progress Update 2023/24**

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

- (1) The Committee was provided with an update on the progress of the audit undertaken to date in relation to the 2023/24 Audit Plan, as agreed by the Committee in April 2023, as well as a summary of the recent Internal Audit follow up work.
- (2) Ms F Smith, Head of KCC Internal Audit was in attendance to answer questions posed by Members.
- (3) To support the work on audit, the Chief Executive offered the Committee a briefing session to a future meeting to give an overview of the Authority's current project programme.
- (4) RESOLVED that:
  - (a) the contents of the report be noted.

**20. External Auditors Audit Findings Report for 2021/22**

*(Item C2 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Committee considered the External Auditors Audit Findings Report in relation to the 2021/22 financial year. There was a delay in the conclusion of the audit review for the 2021/22 accounts due to pension revaluation issues. The External Auditors formally concluded their review of the Authority's financial statements on 27 November 2023.
- (2) Mr P Cuttle was present at the meeting to answer any questions posed by Members. Mr Cuttle reported that the Authority's accounts were of good quality and were received within the required timeframe.
- (3) RESOLVED that:

29 January 2024

- (a) the Audit Findings Report for 2021/22 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

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MINUTES of a Meeting of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held on Tuesday, 20 February 2024 at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

PRESENT: - Mr P Barrington-King, Mr A Brady, Mr D Beaney, Mr N Chard (Chair), Mr N Collor, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr M Dendor, Mr P Harman, Mrs S Hohler, Mr M Hood, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr B Kemp (Vice-Chair) Mr S Manion, Mr V Maple, Mr J McInroy, Ms J Meade, Ms C Parfitt-Reid, Mr M Prenter, Mr A Ridgers, Mr C Simkins, , Mr B Sweetland, Ms Z Van-Dyke.

APOLOGIES: - Mr A Booth, Mr P Cole and Mr M Sole.

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss A Millington OBE, QFSM; the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Mrs A Hartley; the Director, Response and Resilience, Mr M Rist; Director Protection, Prevention and Customer Engagement, Mr J Quinn; Assistant Director, HR and Culture, Ms L Jell; Assistant Director, Response, Mr M Deadman; Assistant Director, Resilience, Mr C Else; Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions, Mrs N Walker; Head of Policy, Dr O Thompson; and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: - Mr M Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Mrs J Waterman, Independent Person and Mr P Cuttle, Grant Thornton.

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### 31. Chairman's Announcements

*(Item A1)*

- (1) Members and Officers held a minute's silence as a mark of respect following the death of Chief Fire Officer Wayne Brown from West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service.
- (2) The Chair, on behalf of Members, gave thanks to John McGonigal, Head of IT for providing Members with a briefing session, prior to the main meeting, on the work the Authority is doing around Cyber Security.
- (3) The Chair welcome Paul Cuttle, Grant Thornton, to the meeting.
- (4) The Chair, on behalf of Members, welcomed to the Authority Lyndsey Jell as the new Assistant Director HR and Culture.
- (5) The Chair, on behalf of Members, sent best wishes to Mark Woodward – Assistant Director Customer and Building Safety on his retirement.
- (6) The Chair, on behalf of Members, gave congratulations to Leanne McMahon as the new Assistant Director Customer and Building Safety.
- (7) The Chair, on behalf of Members, gave congratulations to Suzanna Chisholm as the new Area Manager Building Safety.
- (8) The Chair, on behalf of Members, gave thanks to Bhupinder Gill, who is standing down as the Authority's Monitoring Officer with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

#### 32. Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee – 27 September 2023

*(Item A4)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 27 September 2023, be noted.

**33. Minutes – 19 October 2023**  
*(Item A5)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 19 October 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

**34. Community Risk Management Plan Consultation Finding and Next Steps**  
*(Item B1 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) Members considered the findings from the responses to the public consultation on the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) risk analysis and assessment document, 'Creating a Safer Future – Together'.
- (2) Members were pleased to learn that the number of responses received to the consultation this time around hit 1800, the biggest number received to date. Members requested that a message be sent out publicly thanking the respondents to which the Director, Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety responded by saying that social media messages will be sent out after this meeting.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the report of the responses to the public consultation on the risk analysis and assessment as set out in the 'Creating a Safer Future – Together' as well as the Council Tax options for 2024/25, be noted.
  - (b) the preparation of an action plan setting out the actions required to address the risks and strategic challenges as presented in the 'Creating a Safer Future – Together' document, be approved.

**35. External Auditors Annual report 2022/23**  
*(Item B2 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) Members considered the External Auditors Annual report for 2022/23; the assessment made on the Authority's Value for Money arrangements covering key criteria such as financial sustainability, governance and how the Authority has improved on economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Alongside this assessment Members also considered the Opinion of the Financial Statements for the year ending 2022/23.
- (2) Members thanked Paul Cuttle and the work of the External Auditors.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the External Auditors Annual Report 2022/23, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
  - (b) the remaining contents of the report, be noted.

**36. Financial Update for 2023/24**  
*(Item B3 – Report by Director Finance and Corporate Services)*

- (1) The Authority considered a report which provided a financial update for the 2023/24 financial year along with setting out the latest forecast outturn position for the Revenue and Capital Budgets, the forecast on year-end reserve balances and latest treasury position.
- (2) In response to a question raised by Mr Brady regarding the availability impacts of the on-call and when does this become operationally critical, the Chief Executive responded by

saying that is a genuine risk which is why there is a need for a review of fire cover, it is no longer viable to just focus on keeping on-call retention, she added that people live their lives now in different ways. There is certainly a need to look at other methods of fire cover.

- (3) Mr Scott said that the challenge is not just within the fire sector, the Police force have the same issues with recruitment of Special Constables. He added that Kent Police have been working with other services, looking at best practice and moving towards specialised roles which in turn has increased availability. The Chief Executive said she was keen to learn more about what Kent Police are doing in this area.
- (4) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the final reserve underspend be apportioned to the Transformation and Productivity Reserve and the Insurance and Revenue Reserve with the split being agreed at the July meeting of the Authority, be approved in principle.
  - (b) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

### 37. Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2024/25 and Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28

*(Item B4 - Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered a report setting out proposals for its Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax levels for 2024/25; the assumptions used in developing the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024-28; the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy and related Prudential Indicators; the Reserves Strategy and Capital Strategy.
- (2) Members also considered the Statement of Assurance given by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services as the Authority's Treasurer (Chief Financial Officer).
- (3) Members placed on record their thanks to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and her team for the excellent way in which the Authority's finances are managed especially in what has again been a very challenging year.
- (4) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the Statement of Assurance given by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services as the Authority's Treasurer (Chief Financial Officer) be accepted.
  - (b) the revenue budget proposals and the resulting net budget requirement for 2024/25 of £94,730m, as set out in Appendix 2, be approved.
  - (c) a total requirement from Council Tax of £60,399m to be raised through the precept to meet the 2024/25 revenue budget requirements, which requires an increase in Council Tax of 2.99%, resulting in the following annual charges for each Council Tax Band be approved.

Council Tax Band	Annual Charge
A	£59.84
B	£69.93
C	£79.92
<b>D</b>	<b>£89.91</b>
E	£109.89
F	£129.87
G	£149.85
H	£179.82

- (d) the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, make any late adjustments which may be required to the next revenue budget, arising as a result of any late changes to the Council Tax, Business Rates or Government Funding be approved.
- (e) the Capital Budget of £12,752m for 2024/25 and related expenditure commitments following on in later years, together with the sources of funding identified to fund the expenditure, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
- (f) the Capital Strategy, as attached at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.
- (g) the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, including the appropriate Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 4 to the report, be approved.
- (h) the Reserves Strategy as set out in Appendix 5 to the report, be approved.
- (i) the assumptions being used to develop the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024-28 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

**38. Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25**

*(Item B5 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (Sections 4.6 and 5.3) require that fire and rescue authorities publish an annual efficiency plan.
- (2) In January 2024 the Home Office issued updated guidance about how fire and rescue authorities are to prepare efficiency plans, the name also being updated to a 'Productivity and Efficiency Plan'.
- (3) The Authority considered its Productivity and Efficiency Plan for 2024/25.
- (4) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) The Productivity and Efficiency Plan for 2024/25, as attached at Appendix 1, be approved.

**39. Pay Policy Statement 2024/25**

*(Item B6 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25, which the Authority is required by the Localism Act 2011 to publish before the start of the new financial year.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the Authority's draft Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

**40. Disciplinary Policy for Dealing with an Allegation of Misconduct by a Senior Officer**

*(Item B7 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered a report which contained a disciplinary policy specifically aligned to Senior Officers and Statutory Officers, which is defined as the Chief Executive, a member of the Corporate Management Board (including Chief Financial Officer) and Monitoring Officer.
- (2) With the introduction of the Disciplinary Policy for Senior Officers, Members also considered the name change of the Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee to Senior Officer Appointments, Conditions and Conduct Committee (SOACC); the revised Terms of Reference for SOACC; revisions to the Authority's Standing Orders and the revised Terms of Reference for the Hearings Panel.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the Disciplinary Policy for Senior Officers and Statutory Officers, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- (b) the name change of the Senior Officer Appointments and Conditions Committee to Senior Officer Appointment, Conditions and Conduct Committee (SOACC), be approved.
- (c) the revised Terms of Reference for the Senior Officer Appointment Conditions and Conduct Committee (SOACC), be approved.
- (d) the revisions made to the Authority's Standing Orders to reflect the procedure for dealing with an allegation of misconduct by a Senior Officer and Statutory Officer, be approved.
- (e) the revised Terms of Reference for the Hearings Panel, be approved.

**41. Members' Allowances Scheme 2024/25**

*(Item B8 - Report by Clerk to the Authority)*

- (1) It is a requirement of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 that every local authority must formally adopt a new Members Allowances Scheme each year. The Authority consider the Scheme for 2024/25.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the existing Members' Allowances Scheme, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be formally re-adopted for 2024/25.

**42. Monitoring Officer Provision**

- (1) It is a statutory requirement for this Authority to appoint a Monitoring Officer to carry out the responsibilities set out within Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- (2) Following notification from the Authority's current Monitoring Officer that it was his intention to stand down from this role with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, Members considered a report setting out proposals for a future Monitoring Officer Provision with Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP).
- (3) Since the initial report went to publication progression had been made further on the discussions with MKIP and therefore an addendum was presented to Members with revised recommendations.
- (4) RESOLVED that:
  - (a) the Authority continues its discussions with Mid Kent Improvement Partnership to secure a Monitoring Officer provision, be approved.
  - (b) that the Clerk to the Authority and Director Finance and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, agrees the appointment of the appropriate officer within MKIP, the Service Level Agreement and associated fees before reporting back to the Authority at its meeting in July, be approved.

**43. Activity Update**

*(Item C1 – Presentation by Director Response and Resilience and Director Protection, Prevention and Customer Engagement)*

- (1) The Authority received a presentation from the Director Response and Resilience on a noteworthy incident which covered the firefighting and rescue techniques that were

employed, the equipment and resources used and what was learnt as a result of the incident.

- (2) The Director Protection, Prevention and Customer Engagement gave a presentation on a noteworthy building safety prosecution, the actions taken by the Authority and the outcomes leading on from that.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the contents of the presentation be noted.

#### **44. Information Update**

*(Item C2 - Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) The Authority considered information updates on: -
  - A. Inspection Update
  - B. Performance Update
  - C. Response and Resilience Update
  - D. Prevention, Protection and Customer Engagement Update
  - E. Freedom of Information Update
  - F. Policy and Governance Update
  - G. Insurance Information Update
  - H. Pensions and Pension Board Update
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the contents of the report be noted.

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

#### **45. Channel Tunnel**

*(Item E2 – Report by Chief Executive)*

- (1) Members received a report which provided an update on the latest discussions with regards to the Channel Tunnel contract.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
  - (a) the recommendations contained within the report, be approved without opposition.

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### SENIOR OFFICER APPOINTMENT CONDITIONS AND CONDUCT COMMITTEE

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MINUTES of a meeting of the Senior Officer Appointment Conditions and Conduct Committee held on Tuesday, 9 April 2024 at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

PRESENT: - Mr N Chard (Chair – virtue of Standing Order 2.6), Mr B Kemp, Mr A Brady and Mr C Simkins

APOLOGIES: Mr P Harman, Mr V Maple and Mr M Sole

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

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**1. Substitutes**  
(Item 1)

Mr Alister Brady was in attendance for Mr Vince Maple.

**2. Declarations**  
(Item 2)

None

**3. Minutes**  
(Item 3)

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

**4. Motion to Exclude Press and Public**  
(Item 5)

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

#### EXEMPT ITEMS

##### (Open Access to Minutes)

**5. Appointment of Director, Response and Resilience**  
(Item 6)

- (1) Members of the Committee agreed on 27 February 2024 to the advertisement of the Director, Response and Resilience role following notice of the intention to retire from the current postholder.
- (2) At today's meeting, Members of the Committee considered candidates for the appointment of Director, Response and Resilience.

- (3) The Interview Panel comprised of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, plus the other Members of the Senior Officer Appointments, Conditions and Conduct Committee.
- (4) The Committee conducted an interview with the two shortlisted candidates. The candidates were required to give a presentation on a set topic and then questioned against the essential criteria detailed within the Person Specification for the post in order to demonstrate the key competencies required for the role.
- (5) Following the interviews, Members then evaluated the evidence against the key competencies and were provided feedback from the Stage One assessments.
- (6) On the basis of the evaluation and feedback, it was:
  - (a) RESOLVED that, the appointment of Director, Response and Resilience is offered to Mr Matthew Deadman.

By: Clerk to the Authority

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2024

Subject: REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES 2024/25

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

This report will review the political proportionality as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. It will also confirm the Authority's membership of any outside bodies for 2024/25.

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

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Agree, for the purposes of the statutory review of proportionality, the overall political composition as detailed in the report (paragraph 2 and Table 1 refers).
2. Agree the size and political composition of the Audit and Governance Committee (paragraph 5 and Table 1 refer).
3. Agree the size and composition of the Senior Officer Appointment, Conditions and Conduct Committee (SOACC) (paragraph 6 and Table 1 refer).
4. Agree that whenever a Hearings Panel needs to be convened, it should comprise of six Members in total, each of which should be nominated by the relevant Group Leader (paragraph 7 refers).
5. Agree the proposed appointments to outside bodies (paragraph 8 and Table 2 refers).

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

## COMMENTS

### Background

1. The Authority is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review its scheme of proportionality at its Annual Meeting each year, and as soon as practical after any occasion on which the political composition of the Authority changes. The Act requires places on Committees (both overall and within each Committee) to be allocated in proportion to the political composition of the Authority as a whole (subject to the majority group on the Authority being entitled to have a majority on every Committee) unless the Authority decides, without any Member voting against it, to adopt some other arrangement.
2. Since the last annual meeting in June 2023, there has been no changes to the membership of the Authority. The political composition remains as: -  
**Conservative 17; Labour 5; Green and Independents 2; Liberal Democrat 1**
3. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner is also considered as a member of this Authority but is not accounted for within the terms for political proportionality.

### Appointments of Members to Serve on Committees

4. The Authority has two Committees subject to the proportionality rules which are the Audit and Governance Committee and the Senior Officer Appointment, Conditions and Conduct Committee (SOACC).
5. In terms of the Audit and Governance Committee, Members will be appointed to serve on this Committee by the Clerk, following discussion and nomination by the Group Leaders which is in line with the requirements of the Act. Members are again requested to approve the size and political composition of the Audit and Governance Committee as shown in **Table 1** below.
6. With regards to the SOACC Committee, previously the Authority agreed that, because of the nature of the business that SOACC conducts (as detailed in 2.6 and 2.8 of Authority's Standing Orders) it was an advantage for this Committee's membership to be smaller than strictly proportionate, whilst still giving the majority party a major seat on the Committee. Members are therefore requested to agree to continue to retain a small SOACC composition as detailed in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Conservatives</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Green and Independents</b>	<b>Lib Dems</b>	<b>Other</b>
Authority	<b>25 (100%)</b>	17 (68%)	5 (20%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	PCC
Audit and Governance Committee	<b>11 (10)</b>	7 (6.8)	2	1 (0.8)	0 (0.4)	(1) Independent Member
Senior Officer Appointment Conditions and Conduct Committee	<b>6</b>	3	1	1	1	0
Hearings Panel	<b>6</b>	3	1	1	1	0

7. There is one other Member body which does not have to be taken into account in the statutory review of proportionality and that is the Hearings Panel. A Hearings Panel will be convened in line with 2.7 of the Authority's Standing Orders in order to hear cases in relation to any allegations made against any member of the Authority that may have breached the Kent Code of Conduct; any allegation of gross misconduct against any Senior Officer of the Authority as well as appeals against pensions decisions. Panels are called on the infrequent occasions when they are required. Membership is not fixed and can vary from Panel to Panel, but each party representative will be nominated by the relevant Group Leader.

### **Representation on Outside Bodies**

8. It is proposed that the Authority continues its representation on the LGA General Assembly and the LGA Fire Commission and as such Members are requested to agree the allocation of places and voting rights, as shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2**

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Green and Independents</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>
<b>LGA General Assembly</b>	Mr N Chard <i>(1 Corporate Vote and 14 Votes on Fire Issues)</i>	Ms J Meade	Mr P Harman	Mr M Sole
<b>LGA Fire Commission</b> (Two Members normally the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority)	Mr N Chard (Chair)  Mr B Kemp (Vice chair)			

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9. It is important that the Authority complies with the statutory political proportionality requirements as set out in legislation.
10. There are no resource implications arising from this report and any financial costs associated with this will be contained within existing budgets.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11. Members are requested to
  - 11.1 Agree, for the purposes of the statutory review of proportionality, the overall political composition as detailed in the report (paragraph 2 and Table 1 refers).
  - 11.2. Agree the size and political composition of the Audit and Governance Committee (paragraph 5 and Table 1 refer).
  - 11.3. Agree the size and composition of the Senior Officer Appointment, Conditions and Conduct Committee (SOACC) (paragraph 6 and Table 1 refer).
  - 11.4. Agree that whenever a Hearings Panel needs to be convened, it should comprise of six Members in total, each of which should be nominated by the relevant Group Leader (paragraph 7 refers).
  - 11.5. Agree the proposed appointments to outside bodies (paragraph 8 and Table 2 refers).

By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2024

Subject: COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN – DELIVERY PLAN

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

## **SUMMARY**

This report presents the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) strategy document. This is the next step following the risk analysis and assessment document, "Creating a Safer Future – Together" that Members approved in February.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the CRMP delivery plan with strategic priorities and enabling plans set out for the next four-year strategy period, [Appendix 1 CRMP Strategy and Plans](#). The plan is based on the responses to the public consultation on the risk analysis and assessment set out in the document "Creating a Safer Future – Together". (paragraphs 3 to 8 refer).
2. Note the contents of the extensive evaluation carried out against the strategies for the last strategy period 2021-2024, (paragraph 9 and [Appendix 2, Evaluation Document](#). refers).
3. Approve the proposed change to the cycle of public consultation on the CRMP (paragraphs 11-17 refer).

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Chief Executive – Ann Millington  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121  
EMAIL: [ann.millington@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:ann.millington@kent.fire-uk.org)  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) - Delivery Plan

1. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires every fire and rescue authority to assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect their communities, whether they are local, cross-border, multi-authority and/or national, and prepare an 'integrated risk management plan', or as it is now referred to within the sector, a 'Community Risk Management Plan' (CRMP). The Authority is now undertaking a CRMP process which builds upon the 10-year analysis of the key societal, economic, technological, and environmental changes that were set out in the 2022 Safety Plan.
2. The first stage of our CRMP was a comprehensive risk analysis and assessment. Undertaken in line with the National Fire Chiefs' Council's "Community Risk Management Planning Strategic Framework", this risk assessment was presented to, and approved by, Members at the meeting of the Authority held on 19 October 2023.
3. Between 1 November 2023 and 1 February 2024, the Authority undertook public consultation on the "Creating a Safer Future – Together" document. This also included consultation on the council tax options for 2024/25.
4. The consultation generated a total of 1,859 responses. This is the highest number of responses of any recent CRMP consultation undertaken by the Authority and reflects our carefully planned approach and the effort of our Engagement Team to raise awareness of the CRMP with our stakeholders and customers.
5. There was overwhelming support for both the risks identified and the areas of focus set out in the CRMP document. This strong mandate has given us a firm basis to move forward to the next stage and form actions under each strategic area.
6. Recognising the clear support expressed through the consultation responses for the identified risks and areas of focus, the next steps have been prepared. In the forthcoming period 2025 – 2029, we are ensuring effective integration of actions from our Building Safety, Prevention, and Response and Resilience teams. Our CRMP consultation identified seven areas of focus – Climate change and environment, Health and society, Rescues, Major industry, Buildings and places, Transport, Utilities fuel and power.
7. Appendix 1 is the delivery plan for 2025 – 2029 setting out the strategic priorities and actions required to address the risks and strategic challenges presented in the "Creating a Safer Future – Together" document.
8. To enable delivery of our customer facing strategic priorities we have also defined the enabling internal plans for every area. There are clear long-term priorities and measures which will help us evaluate progress. Each team has an annual plan

which details their roles in delivering against the main priorities. This allows for clear alignment of activities and our medium-term financial plan. The document is attached as a link to this paper as it is a long read. On the public website the document will be available in easy-to-read sections.

9. We have conducted an extensive evaluation of the last strategic period, 2021-2024. This can be found at Appendix 2 and again is a link for Members as this is a long document. Evaluating the last strategic period is a crucial step in ensuring KFRS stays on track to perform and makes informed decisions for the future. It is a chance to learn, adapt, and refine the approach for long-term success. We will publish this on our website after this meeting.
10. This will help us:
  - Learn and Improve
  - Identify successes and failures: By assessing what worked well and what did not, we can learn from our experiences and adjust future strategy. This helps avoid repeating mistakes and capitalise on winning tactics.
  - Adapt to change: The landscape is constantly evolving. Evaluating the past strategy helps identify whether it is still relevant in considering societal shifts, technological advancements, changes in risk such as climate change impacts.
  - Efficiency and effectiveness: The evaluation can reveal if resources were allocated efficiently and effectively in pursuit of the strategy. This allows for better resource management in the next period.
  - Prioritisation: The process can highlight which strategic initiatives delivered the most value. This can inform future decisions about where to invest time, money, and personnel.
  - Measure performance: Evaluation helps assess how well KFRS achieved the goals set out in the previous strategy. This provides a basis for measuring progress and holding leadership accountable.
  - Stakeholder confidence: A transparent evaluation process demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement and can maintain trust of our customers.

### **Change Proposed to Cycle of Public Consultation**

11. Public consultations have traditionally been conducted between October and January, after the contents have been agreed by the Authority. We are proposing a change to that timetable to better align with strategic and financial planning. As such consultations will now typically start in the Summer. The proposed timetable for the four-year plans is presented below for Members approval.

12. In future years and at the summer KMFRA meeting there will be an update on the plan every year and suggested actions for public consultation.
13. At the November KMFRA meeting, Members will review the outcomes of the consultation. The final strategic plans and enabling plans will be developed after the public consultation has closed and the Authority has agreed the responses and consultation recommendations.
14. Members of the Authority will review the Medium-Term Financial Planning (MTFP) assumptions at the KMFRA November meeting, alongside the consultation responses.
15. At the February KMFRA meeting, Members will agree the Medium-Term Financial Plan, which supports the strategic intentions and plans.
16. There will be a specific public consultation on Council Tax each year with accompanying updates on actions which will be in the Autumn. The decision will be made in the February KMFRA meeting.
17. There may be the need to do exceptional consultations within the cycle. On October 17, 2024, at the KMFRA meeting alongside the Council Tax consultation we will also want to launch a public consultation on Performance Standards. To effectively target the actions that deliver our strategic priorities we will review and consult on our performance standards. Most significant is our response time standard. This standard measures how quickly we get to an incident. It is important that we understand this as it will allow us to focus our resources. For example, if it takes us longer to reach certain customers because of their location, we may choose to target additional prevention activity to those customers to drive down the risk to them.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

18. The actions across this plan will need People Impact assessments and budgetary impact assessment.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

19. Members are requested to:
20. Approve the CRMP delivery plan with strategic priorities and enabling plans set out for the next four-year strategy period, see [Appendix 1 CRMP Strategy and Plans](#). The plan is based on the responses to the public consultation on the risk analysis and assessment set out in the document “Creating a Safer Future – Together” and the council tax options for 2024/25 (paragraphs 3 to 8 refer).

21. Note the contents of the extensive evaluation conducted against the strategies for the last strategy period 2021-2024, (paragraph 9 and [Appendix 2, Evaluation Document](#) refers).
22. Approve the proposed change to the cycle of public consultation on the CRMP (paragraphs 11-17 refer).

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By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2024

Subject: GOVERNANCE AND POLICY UPDATE

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

## **SUMMARY**

This report covers the following governance issues:

- A.** Revised approach to governance over policy approval
- B.** Policy update: comprising 'Policies that require Members' approval'; and 'Policies for Members' information'
- C.** Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains Statement for 2023/24
- D.** Legislative update

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the revised approach to governance over policy approval (Paragraphs 8 to 11 refer).
2. Approve the listed policies for Members' approval (Paragraph 12 and Appendices 1 to 3 refer).
3. Approve the Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains Statement for 2023/24 (Paragraphs 14 to 15 and Appendix 4 refer).
4. Note the remaining contents of the report.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: See each section

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL:

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

## COMMENTS

### A. Revised approach to governance over policy approval

*Lead/contact officer: Owain Thompson, Head of Policy*

*01622 692121 ext: 6374 [owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:owain.thompson@kent.fire-uk.org)*

### Background

1. To ensure greater clarity and effectiveness, work is being undertaken to reform and revise the structure and organisation of the Authority's corporate policies and underlying guidance. Our core organisational documents are being organised into four tiers. Policies sit at Tier 2 and guidance sits at Tier 3. The tiers and document types, along with a summary of their function and purpose, are set out in the table below.

Tier	Document type	Function and purpose
Tier 1	Strategy and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Related to legal formation of KFRS.</li><li>• The operation and powers of the Fire Authority, corporate governance, or the Service's organisational aim and strategic challenges.</li></ul>
Tier 2	Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear, simple statements of how KFRS intends to conduct its activities.</li><li>• Represent guiding principles, rather than detailed instructions.</li><li>• The 'how' is detailed in the linked guidance</li><li>• Clear line of approval: CMB, A&amp;G, or KMFRA</li></ul>
Tier 3	Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describes how policies will be put into action.</li><li>• What should be done.</li><li>• When things should be done.</li><li>• Who should do things.</li><li>• What records must be kept.</li></ul>
Tier 4	Forms and reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forms linked to Tier 3 Guidance</li><li>• Examples: mileage or expenses claim forms.</li></ul>

2. The Service has a framework of approximately 75 policies. Responsibility for these sits with the departments to which they relate; for example, HR, Finance, Building Safety, Customer Safety. The application of the tiered structure provides greater clarity over policies and the underlying guidance that is linked to them.
3. As part of this work, over the next 12 months each department will identify any policies that have guidance bundled with them and separate this to stand alone guidance. Policies and guidance are being put into a new template to ensure consistency and the inclusion of key criteria across every policy; for example, the

data inputs relating to the policy, a statement of how that policy supports the Authority's organisational aim, and a list of the underlying guidance for the policy.

4. This makes the policies clearer and more focussed. It will also ensure that Tier 2 policies and Tier 3 guidance will be organised in a clear and consistent format and structure, and meet the accessibility requirements of the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) \(No. 2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#).
5. All Tier 2 policies will have a people impact assessment (PIA) undertaken. As part of meeting the requirements of the [Equality Act 2010](#), the PIAs will assess the potential effects of Tier 2 policies (and their underlying Tier 3 guidance) on those with protected characteristics.
6. In order to avoid disruption to colleagues and the day-to-day activities of the Authority, the work is being carried out in a structured way across each department.
7. Effective governance for Tier 2 policies and Tier 3 guidance will include consultation, approvals and lines of responsibility. Oversight of the development of new policies and any significant amendment to existing policies is provided by a newly formed Policy Board. This meets once every two months and acts as a scrutiny and advisory body ensuring that new policies and significant amendments to existing policies meet an appropriate organisational need, support the overall organisational aim (directly or indirectly) and are suitable for end users. This also extends to consideration of potential indirect or unintended impacts of new policies by ensuring all departments from across the Authority can be sighted on new policies during their pre-approval stage.

### **Policy approval bodies**

8. As part of the work to further improve the governance of the Authority's policies, a comprehensive review has been undertaken of the mechanisms by which policy is approved. This has resulted in improved governance and transparency by identifying the policies that need to come to KMFRA or the Audit and Governance Committee for Members' approval (along with the rationale for needing to do so), and those policies that can be approved by CMB and brought to Members for information (as opposed to approval).
9. The three approval bodies and scope of each are as follows:
  - **Corporate Management Board (CMB).** This is the default and covers the majority of policies as these relate to the organisation's internal, routine day-to-day functions. These will go through the internal governance processes and be brought to CMB for approval. However, if a policy needs to go to KMFRA or Audit and Governance Committee for final approval, to ensure the necessary degree of rigour and oversight it must still go through CMB first, before progressing to either KMFRA or Audit and Governance Committee. Any decision about whether to approve or progress a policy to either KMFRA or

Audit and Governance Committee, will sit with CMB and be based upon a consideration of whether it meets the criteria set out below.

- **Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA).** If one or more of the following are met:
  - i. The policy falls within the Scheme of Delegations, under section 1.2 b) *“establishment and use of reserves setting and revision of prudential indicators for capital financing”*. An example would be the Financial Planning Policy.
  - ii. The policy falls within the Scheme of Delegations, under section 1.2 c) *“All matters relating to the appointment, and terms and conditions of employment, of the Chief Executive and such other employees as the Authority may specify under Standing Order 2.6.”* NB: Standing Order 2.6 relates to those employees covered by SOACC (Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee). An example would be the Disciplinary Policy for Senior Officers.
  - iii. The policy relates to a matter for which CMB determine it appropriate to have the oversight and approval offered by KMFRA. Examples would include those that relate to the regulated functions, such as Enforcement Policy, or Risk Based Inspection Policy; or that have a wider sensitivity, such as the Safeguarding Policy or Automatic Fire Alarms Policy.
- **Audit and Governance Committee (A&G).** If the policy falls within the Committee’s terms of reference. These cover “accounting policies”, which are those relating to bribery, fraud, corruption, money laundering, corporate risk management, and risk financing and insurance.

10. A summary of the current 17 policies that would be required to come to KMFRA and A&G Committee for approval, along with the rationale for doing so, is set out in the table below.

Policy	Approval body	If KMFRA, Scheme of Delegations or oversight	Department
Anti-Bribery Policy	A&G Committee	N/A	Finance
Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy	A&G Committee	N/A	Finance
Anti-Money Laundering Policy	A&G Committee	N/A	Finance
Corporate Risk Management Policy	A&G Committee	N/A	Finance
Risk Financing and Insurance Policy	A&G Committee	N/A	Finance

Debt Recovery and Write-off Policy	KMFRA	Scheme of Delegations - 1.2b Reserves	Finance
Financial Planning Policy	KMFRA	Scheme of Delegations - 1.2b Reserves	Finance
Disciplinary Policy for Senior Officers	KMFRA	Scheme of Delegations - 1.2c Chief Exec and SOACC	HR
Pay and Other Payments for Corporate Colleagues Policy	KMFRA	Scheme of Delegations - 1.2c Chief Exec and SOACC	HR
Recruitment and Selection Policy	KMFRA	Scheme of Delegations - 1.2c Chief Exec and SOACC	HR
Automatic Fire Alarms Policy	KMFRA	Oversight	Building Safety
Charging Policy	KMFRA	Oversight	Finance
Code of Ethical Conduct	KMFRA	Oversight	HR
Community Right to Challenge Policy	KMFRA	Oversight	Policy and Governance
Enforcement Policy	KMFRA	Oversight	Building Safety
Risk Based Inspection Policy	KMFRA	Oversight	Building Safety
Safeguarding Policy	KMFRA	Oversight	Customer Safety

11. The policies listed above are those from the current list of policies. This list will be updated as required when any relevant new policies are approved. This will include the three policies listed for Members' approval below.

## **B. Policy update**

*Lead/contact officer: Owain Thompson, Head of Policy*

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## **Policies that require Members' approval**

12. Since the last meeting of the Authority in February, three new policies have been developed. These have all passed through the appropriate governance process and it has been determined that they meet the threshold for requiring Members' approval. The table below summarises each policy, the reason for its development and the reason for it needing to be brought to the Authority for approval. Copies of the policies are attached at **Appendices 1 to 3** for Members' approval.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Summary of why policy developed</b>	<b>Reason for KMFRA approval</b>	<b>Department</b>
Debt Recovery and Write-off Policy	Ensure clarity and structure over Authority's position on this area. Published as V1.	Scheme of Delegations - 1.2b Reserves	Finance
Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Policy	Provide a robust policy framework for the CRMP delivery plan and strategic priorities. Published as V1.	Oversight	Policy and Governance
Management of Policy and Guidance Policy	Provide a formalised framework for the updated and revised approach to policy and governance. Replaces the old 'Policy Handling Policy'. Published as V1.	Oversight	Policy and Governance

### **Policies for Members' information**

13. In order to ensure that they remain up-to-date and effective, the Authority's policies are revised as required based on a variety of factors, which may include changes to legislation, changes to procedures and practices, and the scheduled policy review dates. The table below summarises new policies, or policies that have been revised or undergone review since the last meeting of the Authority. Copies of these policies can be made available to Members upon request.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Department and summary of changes</b>	<b>Department</b>
Data Protection Policy	Restructured in accordance with new policy templates and guidance. Updated to V6.	Policy and Governance
Health Safety and Environment Policy – Property	Restructured in accordance with new policy templates and guidance. Undergone significant change which justifies the start of a new policy lifecycle, therefore published as V1.	Property
Asset Management Policy – Property	Restructured in accordance with new policy templates and guidance. Undergone significant change which justifies the start of a new policy lifecycle, therefore published as V1.	Property
Control of Contractors Policy	Restructured in accordance with new policy templates and guidance. Undergone significant change which	Property

	justifies the start of a new policy lifecycle, therefore published as V1.	
Learning and Assurance Policy	Developed to provide a formalised policy framework and enhance the governance around the processes and approach to operational learning. Published as V1.	Operational Learning
Business Continuity Management Policy	These four new policies replace the old 'Emergency Planning and Contingencies Policy' and a series of framework documents.  Collectively they ensure the key resilience-related areas are adequately covered at a policy level and that KFRS meets its statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. All four published as V1.	Resilience
Corporate Command, Control and Communications Policy		
Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Policy		
Exercises Policy		

#### **C. Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains Statement for 2023/24**

*Lead/contact officer: Gavin Wolstenhulme, Head of Commercial and Procurement*  
01622 692121 ext: 8651 [gavin.wolstenhulme@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:gavin.wolstenhulme@kent.fire-uk.org)

14. The Procurement Team has prepared the Authority's 'Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains Statement' for 2023/24. This sets out the steps taken by the Authority during this period to ensure that modern slavery does not form a part of any of our supply chains.
15. The statement is published in accordance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Transparency in Supply Chains) Regulations 2015. The Statement is attached at **Appendix 4** for Members' consideration and approval.

#### **D. Legislative update**

*Lead/contact officer: Owain Thompson, Head of Policy*  
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#### **The Procurement Act 2023**

16. The Procurement Act 2023 will come into force on 28 October 2024. This represents a significant change to public sector procurement. Consequently, to aid public authorities in moving over to the new regulations, the government has implemented

a six-month transition phase. The co-ordination of the Authority's response to this is being managed by the Head of Procurement and Commercial.

17. The new regulations aim to give 'contracting authorities' (such as KFRS) greater flexibility to design their own procurement processes, for example by involving potential suppliers in the process of designing a requirement. In doing so, the aim is to improve innovation and ease some of the demands and restrictions of the previous procurement legislation.
18. Alongside this the regulations contain enhanced transparency requirements for contracting authorities, who will need to let markets and the public know in much greater detail information about what is being procured, when, by what means, how much is being spent, and the performance of the contract. This will take place via the publication of public notices over the course of a contract's life.
19. The Authority's Procurement Team will be fully trained and certified in the new regulations, a process which is already under way. Following this, a review and update of all procurement documentation will be carried out to ensure that it reflects the new requirements and processes. First among this will be the development of a new procurement policy and linked guidance. Within this will be potential changes in thresholds of spend and necessary changes to internal procurement processes. Once this is completed the Procurement Team will put in place a series of internal training sessions for those colleagues who need to manage sourcing and contracting exercises, for example the Corporate Management Board, the Strategic Leadership Team, and nominated budget managers. It is intended that this training will be in place and completed by the end of the calendar year.

### **The Data Protection and Digital Information Bill**

20. The Data Protection and Digital Information Bill is making its way through the House of Lords, where it is about to have its third reading. Following this it will return to the House of Commons for consideration of any amendments before receiving Royal Assent. Depending on how this progresses it is possible that it will receive Royal Assent before the end of the summer.

### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

21. 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**

22. Members are requested to:

22.1 Approve the revised approach to governance over policy approval (Paragraphs 8 to 11 refer).

22.2 Approve the listed policies for Members' approval (Paragraph 12 and Appendices 1 to 3 refer).

22.3 Approve the Modern Slavery and Transparency in Supply Chains Statement for 2023/24 (Paragraphs 14 to 15 and Appendix 4 refer).

22.4 Note the remaining contents of the report.

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# Debt Recovery and Write-off Policy



<b>Policy owned by:</b>	<b>Finance Team</b>
<b>Date implemented:</b>	<b>05 July 2024</b>
<b>Version 1</b>	<b>Tier 2 (Policy)</b>
<b>Policy applies to:</b>	<b>Employees, Members, Customers</b>

## Introduction

Debts may arise within the Authority through a variety of ways, and examples of these are set out below under the definitions heading. This Policy sets out the principles that will be applied to recover any outstanding debts or alternatively the principles that should be adopted in relation to writing-off an outstanding debt. The approach to any potential debt recovery and or write-offs will be equitable, fair and transparent and will follow the principles set out below.

## Definitions

This Policy applies to all the Authority's debtors including customers, employees, pensioners and Members of the Fire Authority. It relates only to monetary debt; issues such as non-return or uniform or equipment are covered in the Leavers Policy.

**Customers** – Debts may arise in relation to a service that the Authority has provided, but for which no income or not all of the appropriate income has been received in recognition of the service provided.

**Employees** – Debts may arise in a variety of circumstances, for example late notification of a leaver, overpayment of allowances or overtime etc.

**Pensioners** – Debts may arise through the overpayment of pension.

**Members of the Authority** – Debts may arise through the overpayment of Member allowances or expenses.

**Stock** – Periodically stocks of goods may be past their use and shelf-life and may need to be written off from stock balances.

## Service Policy

### Debt Recovery

The Authority will make every effort to recover outstanding debts in a prompt and efficient manner using effective and fair debt recovery procedures. It is recognised that debt, in some circumstances, will be irrecoverable and therefore subject to the Authority's debt write-off procedures. All debt which is considered for write-off must be recorded in a debt write-off log. This Policy therefore seeks to ensure that the Authority does not exhibit any inconsistent or preferential treatment to any parties when attempting to recover debts or when writing-off debts owed to it. The Policy to be applied is as follows:

**Customer Debts** – Debt recovery will be progressed for all outstanding debts (examples of which are set out in the supporting guidance). Each case will be judged on its merits.

**Current Employee Debts** – The Authority will recover all overpayments made to current employees, regardless of value. In general, overpayments which are less than £100 will be automatically adjusted in the next appropriate month's pay (providing the recovery value is less than 25% of the individuals net pay for that month). However, debts greater than this amount, will follow the overpayment process as set out in the supporting guidance. However, if the debt arose through errors in the organisation's administration, and it is reasonable to assume that it would be difficult for the respective individual to have detected that error, then due consideration will be given to the circumstances and in exceptional cases the debt may be written-off.

**Ex-employee Debts** - Debt recovery will be progressed for all outstanding debts, unless circumstances are such that it is not appropriate to do so (an example of which are set out in the supporting guidance) . Each case will be judged on its merits.

**Pensioner Debts** - The Authority will recover all overpayments made to current pensioners, unless it is either unreasonable to do so, or the pensioner has died. The Authority will not pursue recovery of the debt from the estate in the event of a pensioner's death.

**Member Debts** - Debt recovery will be progressed for all outstanding debts, unless circumstances are such that it is not appropriate to do so (examples of which are set out in the supporting guidance). Each case will be judged on its merits.

**Debt repayment / recovery timeframe** - In general, the repayment timeframe will be the same period as the overpayment period, i.e. if an individual has been overpaid for the last 3 months, then they will have 3 months to repay that debt. This principle will be applied in all cases, but exceptional circumstances may arise that may result in an alternative course of action. For debts of less than £1,000, any alternative recovery timeframes must be agreed with the Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions. If the debt exceeds that value, then approval must be sought from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and or the Assistant Director of HR.

### Debt Write-off

In the event that a debt is to be written-off, the delegations set out in the Officers Scheme of Delegation must be applied. All debt write-offs which exceed £10k in any of the categories set out above, require approval by the Authority prior to the formal write-off notification.

However, some debts may be considered irrecoverable where:

- it is uneconomic to collect – the cost of collection is greater than the value of the debt
- the debt is barred by statute – the Limitation Act 1980 places a time limit of six years on many outstanding unsecured debts. The debt will become 'unenforceable'
- the debtor cannot be traced – despite all reasonable attempts to trace the debtor cannot be found or communicated with
- the debtor is deceased
- the debtor is experiencing hardship – recovery of the debt is likely to cause the debtor serious financial difficulty
- the debtor is in a state of insolvency – there is no likelihood of settlement and there is written confirmation from the official receiver or administrator
- the debtor is suffering severe medical or financial difficulties, which renders enforcement action inappropriate.

Where an outstanding debt of £1,000 or less, is considered to be irrecoverable, a written request to write-off the debt should be submitted to the Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions for approval, and if greater than £1,000 a request must be submitted to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services (and Assistant Director of HR (where the debt is payroll related)). This request should detail the reason for the overpayment, the actions that have been taken to attempt to recover the debt, and why it is deemed as irrecoverable. The Finance Team will record all such debts and present quarterly reports to CMB, setting out those debts that have been written-off and those debts that remain outstanding.

### **Stock Write-off**

In the event that a stock is to be written-off, the delegations set out in the Officers Scheme of Delegation and disposal policy must be applied.

### **Organisational aim**

This Policy supports our value for money ethos, in relation to ensuring that the income received is providing value for money in supporting the delivery of the organisation's priorities and strategic aims.

### **Relevant legislation**

This Policy complies with the requirements of the following:

- The Fraud Act 2006

### **Linked Guidance (Tier 3)**

Debt Recovery and Write-off guidance

## Data Inputs and Controls

The majority of the data will be provided by the HR and Finance Team and held in either the I-Trent system or the BW Finance system.

## Document audit information

<b>Senior manager responsible</b>	Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions
<b>Authorised by</b>	KMFRA
<b>Direct enquiries to</b>	Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions
<b>Date implemented</b>	05 July 2024
<b>Review by</b>	05 July 2027
<b>People Impact Assessment</b>	Hyperlink or reference to PIA
<b>Security classification</b>	Not protectively marked
<b>Version number</b>	1
<b>Version change summary</b>	01/05/2024 (V1) New policy written to provide governance and control over this area.
<b>Related Tier 2 policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Code of Ethical Conduct</li><li>• Financial Framework</li><li>• Officers' Scheme of Delegation</li><li>• Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy</li><li>• Leavers Policy</li></ul>

# Community Risk Management Planning Policy



<b>Policy owned by:</b>	<b>Corporate Policy</b>
<b>Date implemented:</b>	<b>05 July 2024</b>
<b>Version 1</b>	<b>Tier 2 (Policy)</b>
<b>Policy applies to:</b>	<b>Employees, Members</b>

## Introduction

This Community Risk Management Planning Policy outlines the strategic approach to identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks within our community. It is based on the guidelines provided by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and aims to ensure the safety and well-being of all our customers.

## Service Policy

- Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) activities will align to NFCC CRMP guidance and the Fire Standard “Community Risk Management Planning”.
- Our CRMP will comply with the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) requirements in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (section 4.6). Specifically, our CRMP will:
  - Provide an up-to-date risk analysis including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect Kent and Medway;
  - demonstrate how prevention, protection and response resources have and will best be used collectively to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on our communities including economic and environmental impacts;
  - outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
  - set out our management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat;
  - cover at least a four-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the Authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in the National Framework;
  - ensure effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with our customers, colleagues, representative bodies and partners;
  - include a people impact assessment and support equality of access to our services and equity of service delivery; and
  - be easily accessible and publicly available.

## Organisational aim

The aim of our CRMP activities is to directly deliver our organisational goal of saving lives and reducing harm. This will be achieved through ensuring that our resources and capabilities are aligned to the risks our communities face.

## Relevant legislation

- [Fire and Rescue Services Act \(2004\)](#)
- [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England \(2018\)](#).
- [Civil Contingencies Act \(2004\)](#)

## Underlying Tier 3 (Guidance) documents

- CRMP Guidance

## Data Inputs and Controls

- CRMP consultation documents
- CRMP risk analysis
- CRMP strategic plan

## Document audit information

<b>Senior manager responsible</b>	Head of Policy
<b>Authorised by</b>	KMFRA
<b>Direct enquiries to</b>	Head of Policy
<b>Date implemented</b>	05 July 2024
<b>Review by</b>	05 July 2027
<b>People Impact Assessment</b>	Does not need a dedicated PIA as this policy sets out the requirements for CRMP. PIAs will be undertaken as required for each of the constituent pieces of work that form the CRMP process.
<b>Security classification</b>	Not protectively marked

<b>Version number</b>	1
<b>Version change summary</b>	V1 (01/05/2024) New policy written to codify governance and organisational responsibilities around CRMP.
<b>Related Tier 2 Policies</b>	None at the time of publication.

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# Management of Policy and Guidance Policy



<b>Policy owned by:</b>	<b>Policy and Governance</b>
<b>Date implemented:</b>	<b>05 July 2024</b>
<b>Version 1</b>	<b>Tier 2 (Policy)</b>
<b>Policy applies to:</b>	<b>Employees</b>

## Introduction

Policy and guidance management refers to the process of creating, publishing, communicating, implementing and managing policies and guidance in KFRS.

Policy is defined as a guiding principle, stance, or course of action that must be followed to in relation to a specific issue or piece of legislation.

Policy is developed and set by KFRS and will set out the guiding principles, a summary of KFRS' position on a subject, and/or clear, simple statements of how the Service intends to conduct its activities. Our policies do not set out detailed instructions or descriptions of how to do something. Any instructions or processes are set out and described in the supporting Tier 3 guidance.

Our core organisational documents are organised into four tiers. Policies sit at Tier 2 and guidance sits at Tier 3. The tiers and document types, along with a summary of their function and purpose, are set out in the table below.

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Document type</b>	<b>Function and purpose</b>
<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Strategy and governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Related to the legal formation of KFRS.</li> <li>• The operation and powers of the Fire Authority, corporate governance, or the Service's organisational aim and strategic challenges.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, simple statements of how the Service intends to conduct its activities.</li> <li>• Represent guiding principles, rather than detailed instructions.</li> <li>• Must go to CMB for approval and KMFRA for approval or information.</li> <li>• The 'how' is detailed in the linked guidance.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes how policies will be put into action.</li> <li>• What should be done.</li> <li>• When things should be done.</li> <li>• Who should do things.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What records must be kept.</li> <li>• Examples: OINs, CS guidance, BS guidance notes, BSOPs, Ops Learning Framework.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 4</b>	<b>Forms and reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms linked to Tier 3 Guidance</li> <li>• Examples: mileage or expenses claim forms.</li> </ul>

## Service Policy

1. KFRS will have a framework of Tier 2 policies and underlying Tier 3 guidance, that enable us to operate and fulfil our functions effectively, and in a manner consistent with the organisational aim of “Customer – saving lives and reducing harm”.
2. Effective governance for Tier 2 policies and Tier 3 guidance will include consultation, approvals and lines of responsibility.
3. There will be clear and robust processes that will be followed that cover creating, publishing, communicating, implementing, and managing Tier 2 policies and Tier 3 guidance.
4. Tier 2 policies and Tier 3 guidance will be organised in a clear and consistent format and structure, and meet the accessibility requirements of the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) \(No. 2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#).
5. Tier 2 policies will have a people impact assessment (PIA) undertaken. As part of meeting the requirements of the [Equality Act 2010](#), the PIAs will assess the potential effects of Tier 2 policies (and their underlying Tier 3 guidance) on those with protected characteristics.
6. Tier 2 policies and Tier 3 guidance will be kept up to date and follow clearly stated review periods.

## Organisational aim

Having clear governance, approvals and processes covering how we create, publish, communicate, implement and manage Tier 2 policies and Tier 3 guidance, supports our organisational aim (“Customer - Saving lives and reducing harm”) by ensuring that we have a framework of policies and guidance that are rigorous, effective and fit-for-purpose. These policies and guidance will provide clarity to colleagues on the expectation of both the Service and our customers, therefore improving customer experience.

## Relevant legislation

- [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) \(No. 2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)

### Linked Guidance (Tier 3)

- Guidance for the Management of Policy and Guidance Policy

### Data Inputs and Controls

- Register of Tier 2 policies and Tier 3 guidance
- Copies of Tier 2 policies and Tier 3 guidance
- Actions recorded on the 'central record of decision making' spreadsheet

### Document audit information

<b>Senior manager responsible</b>	Head of Policy
<b>Authorised by</b>	KMFRA
<b>Direct enquiries to</b>	Head of Policy and GM Ops Policy
<b>Date implemented</b>	05 July 2024
<b>Review by</b>	05 July 2027
<b>People Impact Assessment</b>	Hyperlink or reference to PIA
<b>Security classification</b>	Not protectively marked
<b>Version number</b>	1
<b>Version change summary</b>	V1 (01/05/2024) new policy written to reflect new governance processes and approvals mechanisms. New PIA undertaken.
<b>Related Tier 2 Policies</b>	Data Protection Policy

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# Kent Fire and Rescue Service

## Modern slavery and transparency in supply chains statement 2023/24

*This statement sets out the steps taken during 2023/24 by Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and is published in line with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Transparency in Supply Chains) Regulations 2015.*

### **What is Modern Slavery?**

Modern slavery is a term that includes any form of human trafficking, slavery, servitude or forced labour, as set out in the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Modern slavery is a serious crime being committed across the UK and globally in which victims are exploited for someone else's gain.

It is a very real and present threat to our society and is sadly all around us, but often hidden from sight and difficult to spot. It can be further complicated by the fact that some of those who are exploited do not identify as victims.

In this statement we share the actions we have taken to raise awareness among our teams, raise safeguarding cases and ensure it is not present in our supply chains.

### **Our ambition**

Since the Modern Slavery Act became law operations and enforcement activity have increased significantly.

At the national level, the number of referrals continues to grow, with 17,004 potential victims being referred to the Home Office in 2023<sup>1</sup>. This is the highest annual number since the establishment of the National Reporting Mechanism in 2009. Of the referrals made nationwide, the number of referrals for child victims was 7,432, which represents 44% of the total. Among both adults and children, the number of referrals for females was 24% (4,088), while the number of referrals for males was 76% (12,903).

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<sup>1</sup> [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary 2023](#)

In terms of the scale and depth of modern slavery worldwide, in 2022 the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery was published. The findings of which reveal that some 49.6 million people were in modern slavery, with 27.6 million people in forced labour and 22 million people in forced marriage<sup>2</sup>. The Global Estimates is the result of a collaborative effort between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Walk Free, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Those who seek safety in the UK from conflict and persecution overseas can be targets for modern slavery. In addition, changes in personal circumstances here in the UK because of the effect of recent inflationary pressures on household budgets could also lead to an increase in victims of this crime. Households that have entered into poverty may be more susceptible to being exploited. Measuring the true impact is complicated as some victims fear homelessness, deportation, or starvation if they speak out.

Protection and prevention are central to everything we do at Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA) (the authority). Together with our partners and suppliers we take our responsibility seriously. Driving the change that we all want to see happen. Everyone in our organisation can act on any concerns they identify. Together we are working towards a world that is free of slavery, persecution, and exploitation.

## **Who are we?**

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

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

The Service employees approximately 1,440 people. We have fifty six fire stations, a training centre, fire rescue control centre, technical rescue centre, and service headquarters. We also have over 60 volunteers available to support customers in times of need.

Our extensive range of prevention activities save lives and keep people safe from harm. Through providing fire safety advice in homes and by installing specialised equipment for those identified as more at risk, we aim to create safer living environments. We have just under twenty Safe and Well Officers who give a

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<sup>2</sup> [Global Estimates of Modern Slavery Forced Labour and Forced Marriage](#)

reassuring service to both the public and any member of our teams who may have encountered someone identified either through operational incidents or home fire safety visits as being 'at risk.' The team works closely with other agencies such as social services, mental health teams, local authorities, housing associations and Kent Police. Together they put high risk intervention measures in place, often at very short notice.

In 2022 a Home Fire Safety Visit Task Force was created; this comprises ten officers who target rural areas and provide operational cover.

11,623 safe and well visits and 5730 home fire safety visits were made by the Task Force in 2023/24. Stations completed 18,389 home fire safety visits bringing the total to 21,119.

We also have twenty-two designated safeguarding officers (DSOs) with seven of these out of hours. Our internal and external safeguarding processes make sure the service helps to protect the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk as our teams meet them during their work. We have a safeguarding policy and guidance that includes activities that are undertaken to protect specific children, young people and adults who are suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse harm or neglect. Between 01 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 our teams raised 547 safeguarding cases. Looking at the longer term picture, since 01 April 2011, we have raised a total of 2,366 cases.

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

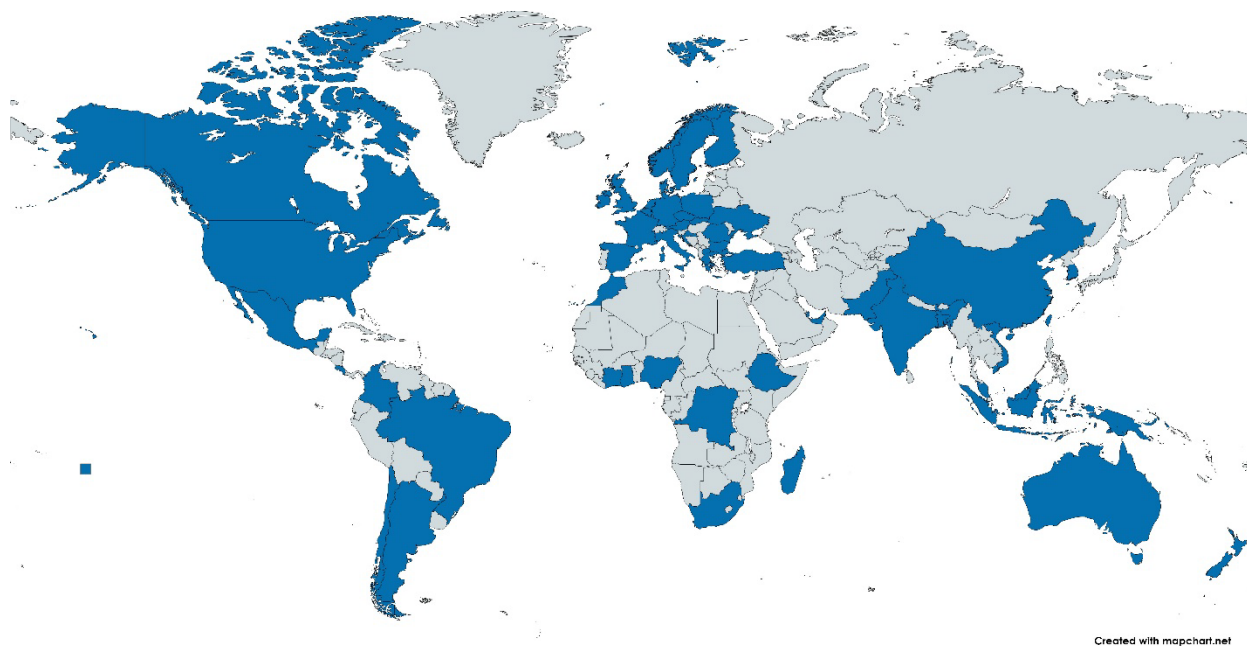
We are committed to a culture of listening and understanding to encourage everyone to be curious and compassionate. We have internal and external whistleblowing routes for colleagues to raise concerns to prevent and identify harm. This culture and practice not only help us all to value difference and be kind it means we are able to identify when someone is at risk of harm.

We don't just comply with the relevant laws and practices on how we should treat colleagues, customers and anyone who comes into contact with our organisation. We extend our role beyond compliance by making sure we do not tolerate discrimination in our business practices, or the behaviours of anyone within our organisation or networks.

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

## Our sourcing map

Our average annual spend with third parties is £20m and we currently source a variety of goods and services from 56 countries worldwide (a decrease from 58 as published in our 2022/23 statement). Whilst we still source from Ukraine, supplies have, unsurprisingly, been limited and reduced since the country's invasion by Russia,



## List of countries we source goods and services from

<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>Madagascar</b>
<b>Argentina</b>	<b>Malaysia</b>
<b>Australia</b>	<b>Mexico</b>
<b>Austria</b>	<b>Monaco</b>
<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>Morocco</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>Nigeria</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>North Macedonia</b>
<b>Chile</b>	<b>Norway</b>
<b>China</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>
<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Papua New Guinea</b>
<b>Costa Rica</b>	<b>Poland</b>
<b>Croatia</b>	<b>Qatar</b>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Republic of Ireland</b>
<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>	<b>Romania</b>

<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>
<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
<b>Finland</b>	<b>South Korea</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>Sweden</b>
<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Taiwan</b>
<b>Greece</b>	<b>Thailand</b>
<b>India</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
<b>Indonesia</b>	<b>UAE</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>
<b>Ivory Coast</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>Liberia</b>	<b>Vietnam</b>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	

## **Our progress: What are we doing about modern slavery?**

### **Our suppliers**

Our sourcing map shows our extensive global supplier base. Given the ongoing global supply issues alongside rising costs, it is an evolving picture. To assure the continuity of critical goods and services needed for our front-line our map has expanded substantially. This reflects the work that the Authority is doing to have greater transparency in our supply chains.

We understand modern slavery could appear in our supplier's business, or any supplier in the chain from raw material to disposal.

As a publicly funded organisation, we ensure absolute transparency in all our purchasing decisions and practices. We continue to build on our promise in our previous statements that all of our Tier 1 suppliers will need to sign up to the [Modern Slavery Assessment Tool](#). We have made great progress in this area. Over £21.4m worth of contracts with suppliers across all categories (fleet, information communications technology, facilities management and construction, operational equipment, clothing/personal protective equipment and professional services) are now working with us to publish their performance against key measures on the tool. The level of information shared with us is proportionate to the critical nature of the goods and services that each supplier gives us, and the level of risk of modern slavery associated with the specific markets they work within.

We work with our Tier 1 suppliers to make sure that they are committed to training workers and their local suppliers on modern slavery risks and compliance.

It certainly cannot be underestimated how complex the audit and traceability processes are when dealing with multi-tier supply chains. This must absolutely be done collaboratively with our Tier 1 suppliers, which will take time, not least because of the dynamic nature of global markets. However, the progress that we are making by working closely together with our suppliers with a shared purpose and values will continue to ensure that we play our part to combat this issue and ensure high standards among everyone that engages with our organisation.

Our suppliers are taking positive steps to help make sure that their supply chains and every individual that works within the chain is free of any risk of modern slavery. Action such as on-site pre-enrolment systems and anonymised call cycles to check directly with workers regarding their human rights and their personal experiences of the employment processes to ensure that they are ethical, and every individual is aware of their rights. We also have suppliers who are signed up to and follow the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority protocols; and suppliers who are in collaboration with the UK Construction Industry to address slavery and forced labour risks in the industry.

### **Supplier code of conduct**

The authority works in a responsible, ethical and open way and we expect the same from our suppliers. We have set out the standards, values and behaviours we expect from our suppliers in our [Supplier Code of Conduct](#). We ask suppliers to confirm that they will work with us to protect and respect human rights.

### **Policies and controls**

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

- Modern Slavery Policy
- Speak Up Policy
- Transparency Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Managing Safeguarding Allegations Policy

If a modern slavery risk is identified, our Modern Slavery Policy provides links to comprehensive legal guidance.

We keep our policies under regular review, ensuring that we have the right guidance, processes and controls in place to detect modern slavery related offences.

We work closely with external agencies and law enforcement, as well as attending industry meetings to stay on top of emerging modern slavery trends. The intelligence we get from this helps us strengthen our capabilities to recognise red flags in customers' transactional behaviours.

## **Looking after our people**

Our internal policies encourage a culture of supporting and empowering our people, recognising that we must ensure that modern slavery is considered at every significant decision gateway internally, as well as externally.

In March 2023 we adopted an updated flexible working policy, which means that from day one of joining our organisation, colleagues can request flexible working to enable greater opportunities for work-life balance. The policy reflects our pro-active approach to introducing measures that give our people freedom of choice, long before any legislation changes. It is quite simply the right thing to do.

We understand that social isolation has become a growing issue since the covid-19 pandemic, which is a known factor for increasing risk of exploitation. We have set clear guides for managers in terms of adding in regular face to face touchpoints with colleagues. We also have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in place for 24/7 support.

We make sure that any recruitment services that we engage apply the same high standards that we do. Verifying ID, the right to work in the UK along with Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks helps us learn who we are employing to identify whether someone is connected to modern slavery-related activities, as perpetrator or victim.

## **Process and risk**

We have developed a safeguarding concern referral form. We signpost our people to the process of raising a concern through guidance published on our intranet, safeguarding training is mandatory. We have widely distributed posters, some of which have been developed with our external EAP provider, that signpost colleagues on whistleblowing. or show a process flow diagram for raising a concern. We continually look at the referral process to make sure that first accounts are recorded by the person identifying the concern. The information asked for on our referral form is consistent with other partners. We make sure the concerns and feelings and wishes of the person are documented at the earliest opportunity.

Working with our legal advisers, we have developed improved obligations on our suppliers by introducing modern slavery compliance clauses which we are including in procurement projects. As a result, our suppliers are obligated to take steps to

investigate and identify issues relating to the Modern Slavery Act and to tell us at once if they become aware of any issues within their supply chains. We want to make sure that the rights of everyone working on our contracts are protected and have therefore also included provision for income security and working hours. Our future contracts will also include details of the Modern Slavery Helpline and link to the online reporting facility.

## **Training and awareness**

### **All of our teams**

A two-year training plan was launched in March 2022. Modern slavery and human trafficking e-learning is mandatory for all new and existing colleagues as part of our safeguarding training. Specific roles will decide whether members of our teams receive level 2, 3 or 4 training, e.g., call handler level 2, safeguarding officer level 4. This is evidenced in our Safeguarding Policy.

The training plan is reviewed on an annual basis.

### **Our frontline**

Since the National Fire Chief Council 'train the trainer' session in October 2021 169 colleagues have completed Enhanced Level 2 safeguarding training and 73 have completed the Level 3 and Level 4. Refreshers are planned for 2025.

Monthly Level 2 content is being provided to operational colleagues via Station Based Training bitesize videos and through station visits.

## **Commercial and Procurement**

The Commercial and Procurement team whilst going through a period of change has continued its good progress with its commitment to Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) Ethical Procurement and Supply E-Learning. All team members that have responsibility for sourcing or supplier relationship management have now completed the training and are certified.

The team is also committed to their ongoing contract management with existing strategic suppliers to ensure their commitment to working within the requirements of the Modern Slavery Regulations – taking extra note of the new UK Public Procurement Regulations in this area coming into effect in late 2024. The team will always maintain their continued professional development and regularly participate in webinars to expand their learning and exposure to actions taken and lessons learned from real-life cases found within supply chains.

## Collaboration and stakeholder engagement

Compliance and positive steps towards change relies on teamwork. Our partnerships are integral for the Authority in addressing modern slavery risks, helping us to stay on top of emerging modern slavery trends and strengthen our detection capabilities.

We have had many intervention successes resulting from multi-agency collaboration, like the number of safeguarding cases we have identified.

Key organisations and initiatives we continue to partner with are:

Partner	Support offered	Issues and area of work	Working together
Stop the Traffik	Registered Charity building a global picture of human trafficking hotspots and trends through information sharing and collaboration.	To build resilience into communities, and to encourage appropriate response and reporting.	Providing training and support to KMFRA Safeguarding Manager.
The Salvation Army	Registered charity providing a diverse range of services to support those in need.	Modern Slavery Helpline available 24/7.	Support provided via the helpline if concerns are identified, and further advice needed.
Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority	Non-departmental public body set up to protect vulnerable and exploited workers.	Investigate reports of worker exploitation and illegal activity such as human trafficking, forced labour and illegal labour provision, as well as offences under the National Minimum Wage and Employment Agencies Acts.	Point of reference for knowledge, skills, and experience in terms of all aspects of human rights abuse.  Presented at senior managers forum to build on knowledge and awareness across our organisation
Kent Police	Emergency services partner	First responders for modern slavery issues	Sharing of information if detected to help trace individuals.

			Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Co-ordinator provided training to our Designated Safeguarding Officers and Head of Commercial and Procurement
UK Fire and Rescue Services	Fire and rescue sector	Sharing of knowledge and information	Sharing of model template for Modern Slavery Policy for adoption sector wide.

## Looking ahead

We are proud to report that we are responding to modern slavery in a way that reflects our Customer Promise, with safety being our primary focus.

Modern slavery is a complex, multi-layered issue. We are committed to our responsibility to regularly review our policies, due diligence, and risk assessment processes to strengthen our approach to modern slavery. This allows us to identify, assess, and address risk, to tackle modern slavery from its root causes and protect the human rights of the people in our business and supply chains.

We will continue to widen the scope of our due diligence to engage and share our ambitions with our suppliers and train everyone within our organisation to spot the signs of modern slavery.

It is crucial that we measure how effective our efforts are in delivering long-term sustainable change and tackling modern slavery from its root causes and we will be proud to carry the CIPS ethical mark once awarded as a symbol of our commitment.

Over the reporting period that this statement covers, we have increased our knowledge of our supply chains by growing the number of suppliers that are working with us to mitigate modern slavery risks in our supply base.

We recognise that there is still progress to be made across our supply chains. We are committed to reviewing and improving our practices and collaborating with others to ensure that we continually improve within an ever-changing world.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners, including our customers and suppliers, without whom our work to protect the rights of individuals in our supply chains and address the risk of modern slavery wouldn't be possible.

Signed

Nick Chard  
Chair, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Ann Millington  
Chief Executive, Kent Fire and Rescue Service

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By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2024

Subject: TREASURY MANAGEMENT YEAR END REPORT FOR 2023/24

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

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

A provisional outturn report was provided to members of the Audit and Governance Committee at the April 2024 meeting and this report concludes the final outturn now that the 2023-24 financial statements are finalised.

The Authority continued to prioritise security and liquidity over potential yield in line with CIPFA guidance. Interest rates on deposits continued to rise throughout the year and stabilised for the last quarter as the Bank of England voted to maintain the rate at 5.25%. The Authority received a total investment income of £2,472k on an average cash balance of £48.5m. The average rate of interest on balances for the year was 5.09% compared to the 12-month SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Average) rate of 5.07%.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve this year-end report on Treasury Management activity for 2023/24.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Head of Finance, Treasury and Pensions - Nicola Walker  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 ext. 6122  
EMAIL: [nicola.walker@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:nicola.walker@kent.fire-uk.org)  
BACKGROUND PAPERS:

## COMMENTS

### Introduction

1. The Authority approved the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2023/24 at its meeting on 21 February 2023 (Minute 32) and received a mid-year update at its meeting on 19 October 2023 (Minute 26). The report reviewed the main aspects of the Authority's Treasury Management up to the end of August 2023 (mid-year), as required by the Local Government Act 2003 and the CIPFA Code on Treasury Management and Capital Finance. Throughout the year the Audit and Governance Committee have received regular updates on Treasury performance.
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 2023/24 outturn position (as at the 31 March 2024) for treasury activities during the year and highlights compliance with the Authority's policies previously approved by Members.

### Annual Treasury Management Review 2023/24

3. **Economy and Interest rates** – The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee increased interest rates at three meetings in 2023/24, starting with a 0.25% increase to the base rate in May, increasing it to 4.50%, and finally in August 2023, the base rate increased to 5.25%. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to maintain the rate at 5.25% in every meeting since. This meant that although opportunities for investment returns have been greater than in previous years, the Authority has seen the interest rates available stabilise more recently, but in some areas reduce compared to its peak, reflecting a possible rate reduction later this year.
4. **Inflation** - The Bank of England has for some time had an inflation target of 2%. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is currently (May 2024) at 2.3%; the lowest level since July 2021, which is due to lower energy prices and reduced-price increases in consumer goods and food. It is expected that inflation will continue falling and reach The Bank of England's target during 2024.
5. **Treasury Position as at 31 March 2024** - The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) at 31 March 2024 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-23	31-Mar-24
	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	1,654	1,878
External PWLB Borrowing	-701	-400
Internal Borrowing (Under-borrowing)	953	1,478
<b>Total Deposits</b>	<b>45,535</b>	<b>43,189</b>

<b>Less PWLB Borrowing</b>	-701	-400
<b>Net Deposits</b>	44,834	42,789

6. **Strategy for 2023/24** - The Investment Strategy for 2023/24, agreed at the February 2023 Authority meeting, saw no changes from the 2022/23 Strategy.
7. The Authority deposits cash balances in a number of different bank deposit and call accounts, money market funds and 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 with an average interest rate of 3.82% and ended the year with an average of 5.28%. The Authority has continued to make use of the Agency Treasury Service provided by the Authority's Treasury Advisor Link Asset Services Group. This gives access to a number of fixed term and notice accounts that we currently do not have access to. In part due to the minimum deposit requirements set by some banks, but it does allow us to access a higher deposit rate than we can access directly. The Treasury team continue to meet with our Bank Relationship Managers to identify new products and available rates.
8. **Borrowing in 2023/24** - The 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy identified that some borrowing may be required towards the end of 2024/25. Expenditure has been incurred in this financial year in relation to the Ashford Live Fire development and it was agreed this project will be funded from internal borrowing whilst interest rates remained high. During 2023/24, 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.
9. **Borrowing outturn for 2023/24** - During 2023/24 the Authority repaid one loan totalling £301k, which had an interest rate of 4.66%. The balance of the outstanding loan at 31 March 2024 is £400k. **Table 2** below details the maturity structure of the remaining loan held by the Authority as at 31 March 2024, which is provided by the PWLB at a fixed rate interest.

**Table 2 – Maturity Structure of Remaining Loan Portfolio**

	31-Mar-24
	£'000
<b>Less than one year</b>	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>

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**

	2023/24 Outturn
	£'000

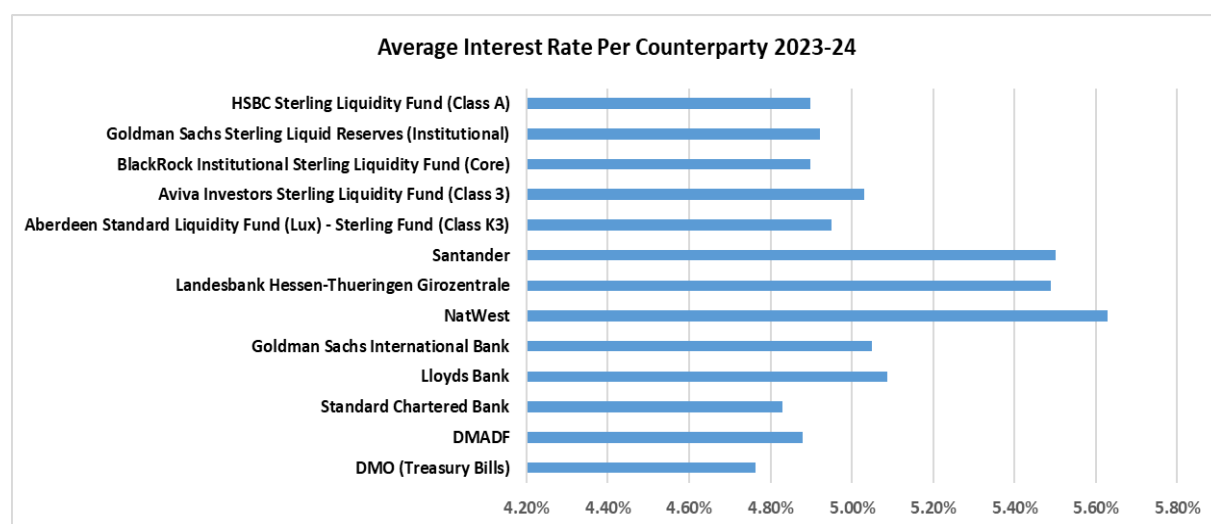
<b>Net Revenue Forecast Outturn</b>	82,370
<b>Net Borrowing</b> *see Table 4 below for calculation	593
<b>Ratio</b>	0.72%

**Table 4 – Calculation of Net Borrowing Figure**

	<b>2023/24 Outturn</b>
	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Minimum Revenue Provision and Voluntary Revenue Provision*</b>	573
<b>Interest paid for borrowing</b>	20
<b>Net Borrowing</b>	593

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

11. **Investment Rates in 2023/24** - The Authority maintained an average cash balance of £48.5m which when deposited earned an average annual rate of return of 5.09%. **Graph 1** below shows the average annual rate of interest earned per counterparty on deposits placed over the year.



12. **Prudential and Treasury Indicators** - The Table in **Appendix 1** shows the original Prudential and Treasury indicators for 2023/24 together with the actuals for 2022/23 and outturn for 2023/24. There were no breaches of limits in 2023/24.
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 to ensure that it continued to receive the same level of advice on investments and borrowing, and access to the same instruments.
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 participate 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 on the latest economic forecast and Treasury Management practices before the September 2023 Audit and Governance meeting. 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. One team member is currently studying for the full membership qualification for the Association of Corporate Treasurers and direct line managers that oversee Treasury activity are CIPFA qualified accountants.

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

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to:

16. Approve this year-end report on Treasury Management activity for 2023/24.

**Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators**

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Original Forecast</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
<b>Prudential Indicators for affordability, prudence and capital expenditure</b>			
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Revenue Expenditure	78,247	85,292	82,370
Revenue Provision for debt repayment	828	1,263	573
Capital expenditure	4,235	16,492	4,719
CFR as at 31 March	1,654	12,167	1,878
Total loans outstanding as at 31 March	701	400	400
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	0.34%	1.50%	0.72%
<b>Treasury Indicators</b>			
Assumed Operational Boundary for external debt	21,000	23,500	13,000
Assumed Authorised Limit for external debt	25,000	27,500	17,000
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	75%	100%	100%

By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2024

Subject: PROVISIONAL FINAL OUTTURN FOR 2023/24

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

This report provides Members with information regarding the provisional final revenue and capital budget outturns for the 2023/24 financial year and includes details of the proposed resultant year-end transfers to Earmarked Reserves.

The provisional revenue budget outturn is an underspend of £2.922m against a budget of £85.292m. The underspend has therefore increased by £170k since the last forecast presented to Members in February 2024, when a forecast underspend of £2.752m was reported.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:-

1. Agree the transfer of £1.5m of the final revenue budget underspend to the Insurance and Resource Reserve (paragraphs 4 and 4(a) refer).
2. Agree the transfer of £0.4m of the final revenue budget underspend to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve (paragraphs 4 and 4(b) refer).
3. Agree that the remaining underspend (provisionally £1.022m) be transferred to the Infrastructure Reserve (paragraph (4 and 4(c) refer).
4. Consider and note the contents of the report.

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

## COMMENTS

### Provisional Revenue Budget Outturn for 2023/24

1. **Revenue Budget** - The provisional revenue budget outturn is an underspend of £2.922m against an approved budget of £85.292m. The underspend has therefore increased by £170k since the last forecast presented to Members in February 2024, when a forecast underspend of £2.752m was reported.
2. The underspend has primarily increased due to; additional grant allocations being announced at the end of the financial year (e.g. on 28 March the Government redistributed a share of the Business Rates Levy Account surplus to all Local Authorities) and; new vacancies or existing vacancies not being filled as early as anticipated in previous forecasts.
3. **External Audit** - The financial statements are subject to review by external audit; hence it is only a provisional final outturn position that is presented to Members in this report. The external auditor presented the draft Audit Plan for 2023/24 to the Audit and Governance Committee in April 2024 and this confirmed the intention for the audit work in relation to the 2023/24 financial statements to commence in July 2024. On 20 June the external auditor confirmed that they would no longer have capacity to start the audit in July as initially planned, and that the audit would likely need to be put back to September at the earliest. The election has meant that the backstop date for completing prior year audits has been delayed so where these audits had been stopped, they will now require completion. Therefore, the external auditor no longer has capacity to undertake the audit for this Authority in July as initially planned.
4. **Allocation of Revenue Budget Underspend** - At the February Authority meeting, Members agreed in principle to apportion the transfer of the final underspend to the Insurance and Resource Reserve and the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve with the final allocations to be confirmed once the final outturn is known. It is now proposed that £1.5m of the final underspend is transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve, £0.4m is transferred to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve, and the balance (provisionally £1.022m) is transferred to the Infrastructure Reserve. Further details regarding this proposal are provided in the paragraphs below:
  - a) **Insurance and Resource Reserve** - The Authority's funding has only been confirmed for 2024/25, so to strengthen the Authority's financial preparedness for uncertain funding levels beyond 2024/25, a £1.5m transfer to the Insurance and Resource Reserve will replenish the reserve following a £1.25m drawdown from the reserve to balance the 2022/23 budget (£427k was planned and £818k was due to the final overspend, primarily as a result of higher than budgeted pay awards). This additional resource will provide

crucial one-time support, should it be necessary to, for example; balance the budget in future years whilst savings plans are implemented, meet a higher than expected inflationary increase in-year or to fund insurance excesses as and when claims arise. The proposed year end balance on this reserve will be £4.6m.

- b) **Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve** - To achieve longer-term benefits, allocating £0.4 million of the underspend to transformation or "spend-to-save" projects seems prudent. Such initiatives typically require upfront investment but deliver lasting cost savings or efficiencies allowing better utilisation of resources. For instance, a review of on-call arrangements is currently underway and by investing a proportion of the underspend in this project, this can potentially unlock longer-term efficiencies and optimise working practices. The proposed year end balance on this reserve will be £0.4m.
  - c) **Infrastructure Reserve** – This reserve funds the capital and large one-off spend in relation to the key assets (vehicles, IT and buildings) of this organisation. In doing so it has mitigated the need to borrow and hence avoided the need to incur high interest charges for borrowing. So to ensure long-term financial stability for managing infrastructure costs, it is proposed to allocate £1.022m of the underspend to this reserve. Whilst costs have continued to rise over recent years, base infrastructure funding has remained fixed, so this will help to mitigate the impact of recent inflationary cost increases. In addition, this will enable the Authority to purchase some new equipment where it has been identified that the workplace needs of some colleagues requires adaptation from the standard (such as sit/stand desks or ergonomic mice etc) (£150k). The Authority will also be able to invest in new lightweight PPE which will improve working conditions for Firefighters' at certain incidents, such as wildfires (£400k). The proposed year end balance on this reserve will be £26.8m.
5. Attached at **Appendices 1** and **3** are the subjective and functional analyses of the revenue budget and final outturn, together with explanations of the material variances at **Appendices 2** and **4**. Whilst it is clear that **Appendices 1** and **3** are in different presentational formats, it should be noted that all subjective headings (including items such as Transfers to/from Reserves) must be apportioned under one of the functional headings. This may therefore result in a heading in **Appendix 1**, such as Direct Pension costs, having a different figure to a similar heading in **Appendix 3**.
  6. **Rolling Budget Reserve** - As part of the closure of accounts process, any funding to support expenditure that has been committed, but for which the relevant goods or services have not been received on or before 31 March, is identified and transferred into the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund the commitment in the following year. As in

previous years, the Authority is holding stocks of some operational equipment and smoke alarms at the end of the financial year, so it has been necessary to put through a stock adjustment at year-end, requiring a corresponding amount to be rolled in to the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund the expenditure which will be recognised in the accounts in 2024/25. At the end of the financial year, £523k was transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund commitments made in 2023/24, but where the associated costs would not be incurred or recognised (stock adjustments) until after 31 March 2024. During the year, £381k was transferred from the reserve to fund expenditure committed in 2022/23 but not incurred until 2023/24, making the net movement an increase on the Rolling Budget Reserve of £142k for 2023/24.

7. The largest items included within the Rolling Budget Reserve closing balance of £761k are; £215k for stocks of equipment held at year-end; £159k for committed premises-related works; £69k for various training courses and; a number of other individually minor items across non-pay budgets that total £318k.

#### **Capital Budget Outturn for 2023/24 and the Infrastructure Plan**

8. The final capital outturn is £4.719m against the revised capital budget of £6.552m. Details of the Infrastructure Plan (including the Capital Budget) and the most significant variances are attached at **Appendices 5 and 6**.

#### **General and Earmarked Reserves as at 31 March 2024**

9. Details of the final year-end balances on each reserve, including capital receipts are shown at **Appendix 7**.
10. **General Reserves** - The policy for the 2023/24 financial year, as agreed by Members in February 2023, was to maintain the General Reserve balance at approximately 5% of the Authority's base revenue budget. In line with this requirement, the General Reserve position as at 31 March 2024 has increased by £290k to £4.260m.
11. **Earmarked Reserves** - Earmarked Reserves at the start of the financial year were £31.833m and, after year-end net transfers to reserves, including the £2.922m underspend detailed above, the provisional balance at the end of the financial year is £33.396m.
12. **Capital Receipts** - The balance of the Capital Receipts reserve was £9.856m at the start of the financial year. During the year there were capital receipts from the sale of two vehicles, totalling £28k (net of administrative costs of disposal). Capital receipts totalling £1.330m were utilised to fund capital expenditure in 2023/24, so the closing balance at the end of the financial year was £8.554m.

## Other Finance Related Issues

13. **Government Grants** - In 2023/24 the Authority recognised £10.327m of revenue grants that were provided to the Authority outside of the core Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). As in previous years the grants recognised in 2023/24 included Government funding towards; employer costs in relation to increased Firefighter Pension Scheme contributions (£3.536m); Business Rate reliefs provided by the Government (£4.146m); New Dimensions and New Threats related work (£1.012m); Services Grant (£603k); additional work in the area of Prevention and Protection (£406k); Firelink (radio communications) (£355k); a grant towards costs incurred due to requirements of the Building Safety Regulator (£113k); training costs for apprentices (£24k); increased costs due to additional audit requirements (£14k); costs incurred to ensure compliance with the Transparency Code (£8k) and; a grant to fund costs incurred on a Road Safety Project (£3k).
14. In addition, grant income has been recognised in relation to; heat decarbonisation (£78k); maritime emergency response (£16k) and; compensation payments for the McCloud pensions case (£13k).

## Firefighters' Pension Fund 2023/24

15. Attached at **Appendix 8** is the final outturn for the Firefighters' Pension Fund for 2023/24.
16. There were more retirements and larger pension commencement lump sum payments than originally forecast for 2023/24 meaning the top-up grant requirement increased by £2.834m compared to the amount that was forecast for 2023/24 when the original Home Office return was submitted in August 2022. The Home Office requested for the original forecasts to not include costs relating to the implementation of the McCloud remedy, but as the remedy has been applied during the year the lump sum payments have been higher than forecast for the majority of retirees, who have chosen legacy scheme benefits for the remedy period.
17. The unaudited return for the 2023/24 financial year was submitted to the Home Office in May and payment of the balance of the deficit in the fund, totalling £5.562m, is expected in July, along with 80% of the estimated top-up grant requirement for 2024/25. The remaining balance for 2024/25 is due in July 2025, once final figures are known.

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

18. Of the final underspend on the revenue budget; £1.5m will be transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve to help meet in-year inflationary pressures that may arise; £0.4m will be transferred to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve to pump-prime transformation or 'spend-to-save' projects and; the balance

(provisionally £1.022m) will be transferred to the Infrastructure Reserve to help to mitigate the impact of recent cost increases, enable additional investment in equipment to address the workplace needs of colleagues, and provide funding to purchase new lightweight PPE for Firefighter's.

19. Resources have been rolled forward to fund any revenue commitments and capital expenditure that has been re-phased to later years.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

20. Members are requested to:-

- 20.1 Agree the transfer of £1.5m of the final revenue budget underspend to the Insurance and Resource Reserve (paragraphs 4 and 4(a) refer).
- 20.2 Agree the transfer of £0.4m of the final revenue budget underspend to the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve (paragraphs 4 and 4(b) refer).
- 20.3 Agree that the remaining underspend (provisionally £1.022m) be transferred to the Infrastructure Reserve (paragraph (4 and 4(c) refer).
- 20.4 Consider and note the contents of the report.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2023/24 Revenue Budget – Subjective Analysis

Figures shown are in £'000	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance
Salaries, allowances and on-costs	72,702	70,300	-2,402
Training expenses	619	483	-136
Other employee costs(inc Insurance)	736	750	14
Direct pension costs	2,101	2,436	335
<b>Total Employee Costs</b>	<b>76,158</b>	<b>73,969</b>	<b>-2,189</b>
Repairs, maintenance & other costs	3,002	3,206	204
Utility costs	2,519	2,988	469
<b>Total Premises Costs</b>	<b>5,521</b>	<b>6,194</b>	<b>673</b>
Vehicle running costs	2,426	2,459	33
Travel allowances and expenses	55	91	36
<b>Total Transport Costs</b>	<b>2,481</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>69</b>
Equipment and supplies	2,496	3,105	609
Fees and services	1,501	1,439	-62
Communications and computing	4,180	3,500	-680
Other supplies and services	840	822	-18
<b>Total Supplies and Services</b>	<b>9,017</b>	<b>8,866</b>	<b>-151</b>
Capital financing costs	631	593	-38
Revenue contributions to Capital	2,592	2,592	0
Revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute	0	-12	-12
<b>Total Capital Financing</b>	<b>3,223</b>	<b>3,173</b>	<b>-50</b>
Grants and contributions	-7,860	-8,546	-686
Investment income	-1,392	-2,432	-1,040
Other income	-238	-335	-97
Net transfers from reserves	-1,618	-1,069	549
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-11,108</b>	<b>-12,382</b>	<b>-1,274</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>85,292</b>	<b>82,370</b>	<b>-2,922</b>

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

Net transfer from reserves as per outturn detailed above	-1,069
Net budget variance (underspend) as detailed above	2,922
<b>Total net transfer to revenue reserves as per Appendix 7</b>	<b>1,853</b>

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### Significant Variances and Movements in the 2023/24 Revenue Budget

The net revenue budget underspend of £2.922m consists of a variety of underspends and overspends, but it also reflects areas of spend that have been slipped to a future year because the service or activity has not taken place in the year for which funding was originally set aside. Hence, the necessary funding will be adjusted against the relevant reserve and released from reserve in the year that it is now required. The main reasons for the most significant variances are commented on below:-

#### Subjective Variance Analysis

- a) **Salaries, allowances and on-costs (£2.402m Underspend)** - The final underspend against this budget heading has increased by £406k since the forecast was last reported to Members in February. This increase is primarily due to an increase in underspends within Customer Services teams due to; new vacancies, existing vacancies not being filled within the timeframes previously anticipated and reduced hours from those taking flexible retirement. Explanations for the most significant variances against pay-related budgets are provided under the relevant functional headings at **Appendix 4**.
- b) **Training expenses (£136k Underspend)** - As reported to Members in February, some external training courses, which were previously planned for this financial year have not gone ahead or have been delayed until 2024/25. As a result, £80k of this underspend is offset by a transfer to the Rolling Budget Reserve to provide the required funding for these courses in 2024/25.
- c) **Direct pension costs (£335k Overspend)** - As reported throughout the financial year, in order to facilitate succession planning into some Customer Services teams, several flexible retirements have been agreed this financial year, resulting in pension strain costs of £227k. This additional cost has been partly offset by savings on salaries where colleagues have reduced their working hours as part of their flexible retirement arrangements. The Authority has also incurred additional costs in relation to firefighter pensions, specifically in relation to; ill health retirements (£50k); injury-related pensions (£21k); non-abated pensions (£13k) and; scheme sanction charges (£24k), which are incurred when members have a tax charge on their pension commencement lump sum.
- d) **Repairs, maintenance and other costs (£204k Overspend)** - The cost of remedial works to be carried out following the completion of various property-related servicing and maintenance compliance checks has been much lower than anticipated,

resulting in an underspend (£177k). In addition, £136k of infrastructure premises-related works has been delayed to next financial year so this amount is offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve to provide the required funding in 2024/25. Other minor net underspends total £33k and are offset by a transfer to the Rolling Budget Reserve to fund commitments where expenditure has slipped to 2024/25. These underspends are more than offset by an overspend of £550k where a provision has been recognised in the accounts in relation to the ground remediation works that are required at the Ashford Fire Station site. This is offset by a transfer from the Infrastructure Reserve.

- e) **Utility costs (£469k Overspend)** - A significant increase in prices earlier in the year has resulted in an overspend against gas and electricity budgets, as previously reported to Members.
- f) **Vehicle running costs (£33k Overspend)** - Although the net overspend against this budget heading is only minor, there has been a significant overspend against vehicle servicing and maintenance (£149k) where costs have increased as some vehicles have been kept longer than originally anticipated due to delays in delivery of the new vehicles. In addition, there is an overspend against vehicle insurance costs due to an increase in the provision for outstanding motor claims (£88k) and an overspend against vehicle hire (£37k) where it has been necessary to hire up to seven vehicles on a temporary basis whilst awaiting delivery of newly purchased vehicles. These overspends are primarily offset by an underspend on vehicle fuel where the average price has been significantly lower than that assumed when setting the budget for 2023/24.
- g) **Equipment and supplies (£609k Overspend)** - A proportion of this overspend relates to a large increase in the number of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) undertaken in 2023/24, resulting in additional equipment purchases, on items such as smoke alarms, totalling £146k. There has also been additional expenditure incurred in order to conform with Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) testing requirements (£133k); additional equipment identified for wildfire incidents (£52k) and a general increase in prices above inflation, primarily for backdated water hydrant repairs (£152k) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (£29k). Other minor net overspends total £97k.
- h) **Communications and computing (£680k Underspend)** - Most of this variance relates to slippage (£447k) and underspends (£89k) on a number of corporate projects, so will be offset by a transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve (see Appendices 5 and 6). Costs in relation to the rollout of Cradlepoint and the Station Network Resilience project were not as high as previously estimated resulting in a saving of £21k. The Authority also received a refund in relation to the incorrect inflationary uplift applied to a government contract and other areas of inflation were not as high as

originally anticipated resulting in an underspend of £56k. Other minor net underspends total £67k.

- i) **Grants and contributions (£686k Additional Income)** - As reported to Members throughout the financial year, additional income was received due to increased charges for services provided under contract due to the higher than budgeted pay award for operational colleagues for 2023/24 (£126k). The Authority received unbudgeted grants to cover costs incurred in relation to; the UK International Search and Rescue work undertaken by the Technical Rescue team (£125k); the work undertaken by the Building Safety team for the Building Safety Regulator (£113k) and; Heat Decarbonisation work (£78k). The Authority has also recognised additional government grant income following notification at the end of the financial year that the Government would; redistribute surplus funds held in the central Business Rates Levy Account (£125k) and; provide an additional grant for Green Plant and Machinery Business Rates exemptions (£19k). In addition, the Authority has recognised £67k of additional Business Rates Relief Grants as notified by billing authorities at the end of the financial year. Other minor increases in income total £33k.
- j) **Investment income (£1.040m Additional Income)** - As previously reported to Members, the bank base rate remained higher than anticipated throughout the financial year. This alongside proactive management of placing the deposits has resulted in significantly better returns on cash balances than originally expected.
- k) **Net transfers from reserves (£549k Net Lower Transfer from Reserves)** – See (m) for explanation regarding the net reduction from the Infrastructure Reserve and the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve (£127k). An additional £276k has been transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve to provide funding in 2024/25 for expenditure that has been committed in 2023/24 but will not be incurred until 2024/25 (see (b) £94k) and (d) £33k. Additionally, £61k has been transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve in relation to stock held at year-end and other minor adjustments total £88k. An additional £146k has been rolled forward in the Government Grants Reserve for use in later years.

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**2023/24 Revenue Budget – Functional Analysis**

Figures shown are in £'000	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance
Firefighting and Rescue Services	35,398	33,667	-1,731
Control	2,557	2,336	-221
Operational Policy and Resilience	11,105	11,042	-63
Fleet and Transport	3,738	3,550	-188
<b>Total Operational Response and Resilience</b>	<b>52,798</b>	<b>50,595</b>	<b>-2,203</b>
Customer Safety	3,290	3,465	175
Building Safety	3,010	3,008	-2
Customer Engagement	1,074	1,000	-74
<b>Total Customer Safety, Building Safety and Engagement and Collaboration</b>	<b>7,374</b>	<b>7,473</b>	<b>99</b>
Corporate Management Board and Customer Support	2,334	2,383	49
Member Allowances and Expenses	78	79	1
People and Learning	3,183	3,029	-154
Business Change and Information Technology	6,917	6,425	-492
Property, Environment and Facilities	5,815	6,616	801
Finance, Insurance and Procurement	3,215	3,111	-104
Business Intelligence, Policy and Performance	850	833	-17
<b>Total Customer Services</b>	<b>22,392</b>	<b>22,476</b>	<b>84</b>
Pension Cost	2,101	2,434	333
Net Financing Costs	-761	-1,838	-1,077
Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital Under Statute	0	-12	-12
Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves	1,508	1,635	127
Non-Ring-Fenced Grants	-234	-501	-267
Admin for Council Tax Support	114	108	-6
<b>Total Pensions, Financing and Other Costs</b>	<b>2,728</b>	<b>1,826</b>	<b>-902</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>85,292</b>	<b>82,370</b>	<b>-2,922</b>

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### Significant Variances and Movements in the 2023/24 Revenue Budget

#### Functional Variance Analysis

The net revenue budget underspend of £2.922m consists of a variety of underspends and overspends, but it also reflects areas of spend that have been slipped to a future year because the service or activity has not taken place in the year for which funding was originally set aside. Hence, the necessary funding will be adjusted against the relevant reserve and released from reserves in the year that it is now required. The main reasons for the most significant variances are commented on below:-

#### Base Budget Variances

- l) **Firefighting and Rescue Services (£1.731m Underspend)** - The final underspend for on-call fire stations has increased from £1.243m (reported to Members in February) to £1.285m. As detailed in the February report, despite the difficulties faced in recruiting and retaining on-call firefighters, overall appliance availability levels remained within the target operating model. The final underspend for wholetime fire stations increased from £0.454m (reported to Members in February) to £0.479m. This underspend is mainly due to the cessation of some allowances following retirements and some colleagues opting out of the pension scheme. These underspends are partly offset by overspends totalling £51k on operational equipment and supplies and £32k on business mileage and travel costs primarily due to the introduction of part-time contracts. Some of the budget allocated for the Station End Equipment project (£35k) and the Mobile Data Terminals project (£26k) has been slipped to 2024/25 and is therefore offset by an increased transfer to the Infrastructure Reserve. Other minor net overspends total £11k.
- m) **Control (£221k Underspend)** - As previously reported, there have been more in-year vacancies within this team (up to ten vacancies) throughout the financial year than in previous years, and this has resulted in a significant vacancy saving due to the time it takes to recruit into these posts. The final underspend has increased from £191k, reported in February, to £221k due to further delays in filling the vacancies. Six new recruits were expected to fill existing vacancies towards the end of the financial year but only three had started before year-end, hence the increase in the underspend. Overall the resourcing in Fire Control is being managed and the essential Fire Control function has been consistently maintained.

- n) **Fleet and Transport (£188k Underspend)** - See (f) in relation to the overspend on vehicle running costs (£33k). This is more than offset by an underspend on the premises lease and legal fees where it was decided to stay in the existing Vehicle Maintenance workshop Unit for the time being (£121k) and extra income from the sale of some additional vehicles deemed surplus to requirements during the year (£55k). Other minor net underspends total £45k.
- o) **Customer Safety (£175k Overspend)** - see (g) regarding additional equipment purchases for Home Fire Safety Visits (£146k). Other minor net overspends total £29k.
- p) **People and Learning (£154k Underspend)** - As previously reported, much of this underspend is against the training budget, primarily where it was identified that some training costs were eligible to be funded by one-off grants (£72k). Other net underspends against various employee-related budgets total £122k (including £73k on pay budgets due to in-year vacancies). Other minor net overspends total £40k.
- q) **Business Change and Information Technology (£492k Underspend)** - See Appendix 6 (h) in relation to Infrastructure slippages that relate to this budget heading (Whole Estate Audio-Visual replacement (£225k) and Station End Equipment Computer Turn Out System (£55k). See (h) in relation to non-Infrastructure variances totalling £144k. Other minor net underspends total £68k (including £31k on pay budgets due to in-year vacancies).
- r) **Property, Environment and Facilities (£801k Overspend)** - This variance primarily relates to Repairs and Maintenance (see (d) £204k) and the increased cost of Utilities (see (e) £469k). In addition, there was an increased requirement to replace some furniture on stations (£38k). Other minor net overspends total £90k.
- s) **Finance, Insurance and Procurement (£104k Underspend)** - As reported to Members in February, in-year vacancies within the Procurement team and a number of colleagues who have taken flexible retirement and reduced their working hours has resulted in an underspend (£180k). This is partly offset where additional costs have been incurred on maternity cover in Finance and other backfill arrangements where a colleague in the Procurement team has been moved onto project work in relation to the Ashford Fire Station and Live Fire Training Facility project.
- t) **Pension Costs (£333k Overspend)** - This variance primarily relates to direct pension costs (see (c) £335k).
- u) **Net Financing Costs (£1.077m Variance)** - This variance primarily relates to additional investment income (see (j) £1.040m).
- v) **Infrastructure Funding and Other Reserves (£127k Reduction in transfer from reserves)** - See Appendices 5 and 6 in relation to the reduced transfer from the

Infrastructure Reserve (£167k). This is partly offset by an increased transfer from the Service Transformation and Productivity Reserve (£40k) as a result of some additional temporary staffing costs due to maternity backfill.

- w) **Non-Ring-Fenced Grants (£267k Additional Income)** - See (i) regarding additional grants received in relation to the Business Rates Levy Account surplus (£125k), additional Green Plant and Machinery exemptions (£19k), and additional Business Rate Reliefs notified by billing authorities at year end (£67k). In addition, the Authority has drawn down the full balance in Local Tax Income Guarantee Scheme grant from reserves, which was £56k higher than the amount estimated when setting the budget.

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2023/24 Infrastructure Budget Outturn

Figures shown are in £'000	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance
<b>Infrastructure Capital Budget</b>			
Ashford Fire Station Redevelopment	1,619	796	-823
Control Location	15	12	-3
Vehicle & Maintenance Unit Lease	244	0	-244
Estate Changes and Development	800	500	-300
<b>Total Station Development Programme</b>	<b>2,678</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>-1,370</b>
Roofing Works	316	183	-133
Boilers and Heating Systems	60	19	-41
Generators	10	32	22
Bay Doors	0	16	16
<b>Total Premises</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>-136</b>
Mobile Data Terminals	248	15	-233
<b>Total Information and Communication Systems</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>-233</b>
Appliances	1,394	1,335	-59
Specialist Units and Vehicles	1,121	999	-122
Cars and Vans	725	812	87
<b>Total Vehicles and Equipment</b>	<b>3,240</b>	<b>3,146</b>	<b>-94</b>
<b>Total Infrastructure Capital Budget</b>	<b>6,552</b>	<b>4,719</b>	<b>-1,833</b>
<b>Infrastructure Revenue Budget</b>			
Premises	686	1,058	372
Information and Comms. Systems	1,462	926	-536
Operational Equipment	129	143	14
<b>Total Infrastructure Revenue Budget</b>	<b>2,277</b>	<b>2,127</b>	<b>-150</b>
<b>Total Infrastructure Revenue and Capital Budgets</b>	<b>8,829</b>	<b>6,846</b>	<b>-1,983</b>
<b>Funded from:-</b>			
Base Revenue Contributions	-3,792	-3,792	0
Internal Borrowing	-1,863	-797	1,066
Infrastructure Reserve	-1,068	-901	167
One-off Funding & Grants	-9	-26	-17
Capital Receipts Applied	-2,097	-1,330	767
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>-8,829</b>	<b>-6,846</b>	<b>1,983</b>

## KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### 2023/24 Infrastructure Budget Outturn

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

#### Infrastructure Capital Budget

- (a) **Ashford Fire Station Redevelopment (-£823k Variance)** - There were delays in securing planning permission because of unforeseen site remediation issues and there have also been delays in appointing a new contractor causing some planned expenditure to be slipped to 2024/25.
- (b) **Vehicle & Maintenance Unit Lease (-£244k Variance)** - The lease rental for the vehicle maintenance workshop was budgeted in anticipation of having to be recognised on the balance sheet in full compliance with the provisions of lease accounting changes under IFRS16. This has subsequently been delayed a year and now comes into effect for local authorities from 1 April 2024, so the annual lease cost for this building (£43k) has been charged to the revenue budget in 2023/24.
- (c) **Estate Changes and Development (-£300k Variance)** - Planned expenditure has slipped to 2024/25 due to contractor scheduling not allowing the full range of works to be undertaken this financial year.
- (d) **Roofing Works (-£133k Variance)** - Roofing work was delayed at the Distribution Centre, due to a delay in agreeing a new roofing contract and issues with the design element, so planned expenditure (£106k) has slipped to 2024/25 while the balance of £27k has been returned to the Infrastructure Reserve as it is no longer required.
- (e) **Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) (-£233k Variance)** - Whilst the installation of the MDTs and companion devices is now nearing completion, work continues in relation to the installation of the MDTs on the Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) and the software on the Training Centre appliances; £95k of planned expenditure has therefore slipped to 2024/25 while an underspend of £138k has been returned to the Infrastructure Reserve as it is no longer required.
- (f) **Specialist Units and Vehicles (-£122k Variance)** - There has been a delay in the conversion of the Wildfire Transport vehicles, so £158k has been slipped to 2024/25. This

is partly offset by some funding being brought forward from 2024/25 where some vehicle chassis were ready earlier than initially anticipated.

### **Infrastructure Revenue Budget**

- (g) **Premises (£372k Variance)** - This variance includes a £550k unbudgeted provision for ground remediation works on the Ashford Fire Station site. This is partly offset by slippage (£121k) on premises expenditure in relation to office changes, works at Coldharbour and the shared facilities at KFRS Headquarters (for which the purchase of hardware and furniture has slipped to 2024/25) while the balance of £57k has been returned to the Infrastructure Reserve as it is no longer required.
  
- (h) **Information and Comms. Systems (-£536k Variance)** - This variance includes £447k of slippage to 2024/25, of which; £131k is due to a delay in the procurement process for the Operational Equipment Management System; £125k is due to a review of the scope for the Operational Response Project; £100k is due to the late submission of bids by potential contractors for the Audio-Visual Equipment Whole Estate Replacement project; £55k is due to delays in the submission of contractor quotes for the Station End Equipment Computer Turn Out System and; £36k is due to other minor slippages. The balance of £89k has been returned to the Infrastructure Reserve as it is no longer required.

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
**2023/24 Revenue and Capital Reserve Balances**

Figures shown are in £'000		Opening Balance 01-Apr-23	Net Transfers 2023/24	Closing Balance 31-Mar-24
General Reserve	(A)	3,970	290	4,260
<i>Earmarked Reserves:</i>				
Government Grants	(B)	1,167	-263	904
Infrastructure*	(C)	26,630	121	26,751
Insurance and Resource**	(C)	3,071	1,509	4,580
Rolling Budgets	(C)	619	142	761
Service Transformation and Productivity***	(C)	346	54	400
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>		<b>31,833</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>33,396</b>
<b>Total Revenue Reserves</b>		<b>35,803</b>	<b>1,853</b>	<b>37,656</b>
Capital Receipts	(D)	9,856	-1,302	8,554
<b>Total Capital Reserves</b>		<b>9,856</b>	<b>-1,302</b>	<b>8,554</b>
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>		<b>45,659</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>46,210</b>

\* Includes a transfer of £1.022m from the 2023/24 revenue budget underspend

\*\* Includes a transfer £1.5m from the 2023/24 revenue budget underspend

\*\*\* Includes a transfer £0.4m from the 2023/24 revenue budget underspend

Notes:

- A. Reserve held to provide a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected costs.
- B. Resource provided by Government with any unspent amounts rolled forward.
- C. Reserve held to smooth the impact of expenditure on the revenue budget.
- D. Reserve available to fund capital expenditure.

**KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**2023/24 Firefighters' Pension Fund**

	<b>Original Budget Estimate (Aug 2022)</b>	<b>Home Office Return (Aug 2023)</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance (Home Office Return)</b>
Figures shown are in £'000				
<b>Pensions Outgoings:</b>				
Pension payments	27,122	28,844	30,507	1,663
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>27,122</b>	<b>28,844</b>	<b>30,507</b>	<b>1,663</b>
<b>Pension Income:</b>				
Employee contributions	-4,085	-4,294	-4,225	69
Employer contributions	-8,959	-9,163	-9,105	58
In-year ill-health charge income	-307	-307	-439	-132
Income for pensions not abated	-130	-130	-125	5
Transfer values received	0	0	-137	-137
Government top-up grant	-13,641	-14,950	-16,476	-1,526
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-27,122</b>	<b>-28,844</b>	<b>30,507</b>	<b>-1,663</b>
<b>Net Pension Fund Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>2022/23 Top-up grant deficit</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Top-up grant requirement – 2023/24 outturn	16,476
Top-up grant received July 2023 (80% of Aug 2022 estimate)	-10,914
<b>Top-up grant deficit for 2023/24</b>	<b>-5,562</b>

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By: Director, Finance and Corporate Services

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2024

Subject: FINANCIAL SUMMARY UPDATE FOR 2024/25

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

This report sets out the first financial update for the 2024/25 financial year and whilst it is still relatively early into the financial year, a summary update regarding the spend against the revenue and capital budgets and a number of other financial related issues are provided within this report.

At the February meeting of the Authority, Members approved a net Revenue Budget totalling £94.730m for 2024/25. However, at the time the budget was set, the Authority was awaiting final Business Rates figures from two District Councils. Final figures have now been provided and as a result the net Revenue Budget has been reduced to £94.713m for 2024/25.

The nationally agreed pay award for operational colleagues for 2024/25 has settled at 4%, which is 1% higher than the provision set aside within the revenue budget. This will result in a budget pressure of around £600k. In addition, the National Employers Side of the National Joint Council (NJC) have put forward a full and final one-year offer of a flat £1,290 increase or 2.5% (whichever is greater) for corporate colleagues. This offer has not been accepted by the Employee Side of the NJC, but it would result in a budget pressure of around £55k.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve, in principle, to the proposed drawdown from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to fund the additional cost of the nationally agreed pay awards for 2024/25, should there be a requirement to balance the budget from reserves at the end of the financial year (paragraph 6 refers).
2. Note the contents of the report.

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EMAIL: [barrie.fullbrook@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:barrie.fullbrook@kent.fire-uk.org)  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Budgets for 2024/25

1. **Revenue Budget Adjustment** - On 20 February 2024, Members approved a net revenue budget of £94.730m for 2024/25. At the time it was noted that two District Councils had not supplied their final Business Rates figures, so estimates were used in setting the budget. Members approved that any final adjustments due to late notification of the funding position be agreed by the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority. Following final confirmation of these figures the Authority's net revenue budget has been reduced to £94.713m for 2024/25. The reduction in funding has been reflected in the budget by way of a £17k reduction to the wholetime staffing budget.
2. **Revenue Budget Virements (Budget Changes) Processed** - Since the revenue budget was approved by Members in February it has been necessary to process a number of technical budget adjustments (primarily due to the reprofiling of spend across financial years), and although the budget adjustments have no effect on the overall net revenue budget of £94.713m, they will have an impact on the Functional and Subjective analyses of the budget. Reportable budget changes are detailed below:
  - a) **Training Expenses (£80k Increase)** - The training budget has been increased by £80k to fund several training courses that were rolled forward from 2023/24. This budget increase is offset by corresponding transfer from the Rolling Budget Reserve.
  - b) **Premises Repairs and Maintenance (£185k Increase)** - The premises maintenance budget has primarily been increased to fund works planned for 2023/24 but where the work had not been completed by the end of the financial year. Consequently, this budget increase is offset by a corresponding transfer from the Rolling Budget Reserve (£105k) and the Infrastructure Reserve (£80k).
  - c) **Equipment and Supplies (£1.683m Decrease)** - The £1.925m budget for the breathing apparatus upgrade project has been slipped to 2025/26 whilst further work is undertaken on the specification, so this is offset by a reduction in the transfer from the Infrastructure Reserve. This budget reduction has been partly offset by an increase to fund purchases of various pieces of operational equipment, such as incident lighting and soft-shell jackets, that were committed in 2023/24 but not delivered by the end of the financial year. These increases to the budget are offset by a corresponding transfer from the Rolling Budget Reserve. The 2023/24 year-end stock adjustments that were also transferred to the Rolling Budget Reserve have been reversed in 2024/25.
  - d) **Fees and Services (£120k Increase)** - This budget has been increased by £122k to fund a number of projects that were committed in 2023/24 but where spend was

delayed. This includes projects on data architecture and a digital education platform. The increase in the budget for projects that have slipped from 2023/24 is offset by a transfer from the Rolling Budget Reserve. This budget heading has also been increased to fund additional administration costs in relation to the two pension cases (Matthews and McCloud) (£50k), offset by a transfer from the Government Grant Reserve. In addition, the budget has been increased by a further £125k to reflect slippage from 2023/24 on the Customer and Premises Risk Management (Dynamics) project, offset by a transfer from the Infrastructure Reserve. These budget increases are partly offset by a budget reduction where budgets in relation to the Network Fire Service Partnership (NFSP) have been realigned to other subjective budget headings (£188k). Other minor net budget increases total £11k.

- e) **Communications and computing (£381k Increase)** - The increase to the budget in this area primarily relates to infrastructure slippage from 2023/24 across various projects such as; the Audio-Visual Equipment Whole Estate Replacement project (£100k); the Operational Equipment Management System project (£131k) and; the Station End Equipment Computer Turn Out System project (£55k) which are all offset by a transfer from the Infrastructure Reserve. In addition funding for the Website Development project has been released from the Rolling Budget Reserve (£42k). Other minor net budget increases total £53k.
  - f) **Other Supplies and Services (£228k Increase)** - This budget has increased primarily as a result of the realignment of the Network Fire Service Partnership (NFSP) budgets from the Fees and Services heading. Other minor net budget increases total £40k.
  - g) **Revenue Contribution to Capital (£371k Decrease)** - This budget reduction reflects a net reduction in the capital budget for 2024/25 (see paragraphs 8 and 9). This is primarily due to slippage to 2025/26 on the Ashford Fire Station and Live Fire Training Facility project (£1.066m) offset by a net increase to property budgets where projects have been rephased between financial years (mainly slippage from 2023/24 to 2024/25).
3. **Pay Awards for 2024/25** - On 25 April 2024, the National Employers Side of the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services put forward the offer of a 4% increase on all basic pay rates for operational colleagues, effective from 1 July 2024. The offer also included; proposed changes to the Retained Duty System (RDS) retainer fee and; maternity pay. Whilst the proposed changes to the RDS retainer fee and maternity pay will not have an impact, as the Authority operates a local arrangement for on-call pay (which will be uplifted by the 4% increase) and already provides better maternity pay arrangements than those proposed, the offer of a 4% increase is above the 3% budgeted for 2024/25. Following a ballot of it's members in May, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) which holds the majority of Employee seats on the NJC, accepted the offer

put forward by the Employers Side. The additional unbudgeted cost for the Authority will be around £600k in 2024/25.

4. On 16 May 2024, the National Employers Side of the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services put forward a full and final, one-year offer for corporate colleagues, of a flat £1,290 up to scale point 43 (inclusive) and 2.50% beyond this point. The offer equates to an average increase of just over 3.35% and would result in an unbudgeted cost pressure of around £55k. At the time of finalising this report the Trade Unions Side of the NJC has yet to respond to the offer.
5. **Revenue Forecast Outturn** - Although the Authority is now committed to significant unbudgeted pay costs, due to the nationally agreed pay awards as set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 above, no overall variance is reported to Members at this early stage of the 2024/25 financial year. This is primarily because the Authority is now likely to receive a significant increase in its investment income in 2024/25, as the Government will be paying a substantial grant (£21m) to the Authority in July 2024, in relation to the Matthews (£18m) and McCloud (£3m) pension cases. The total value of the Matthews grant is much higher than current cost expectations of additional one-off pension payments in the current financial year. The level of grant allocation was based on calculations produced by the Government Actuary department, assuming that we received a response to the 1200 letters that were sent out to potentially eligible on-call firefighters in December 2023. However, to date only 460 responses have been received. Unspent grant will be returned to the Government through the Firefighters' Pension Fund top-up process in July 2025, but surplus funds will be available for investment until such time that they are required to be spent on pension payments or are required to be repaid to central Government.
6. The higher than budgeted pay awards for operational and corporate colleagues will create a pressure on pay budgets (£600k for operational colleagues and an estimated £55k for corporate colleagues (see paragraph's 3 and 4 above)) in 2024/25. However, no overall variance is currently forecast for the year, because the additional investment income arising as a result of the higher than expected 'Matthews' grant is likely to significantly offset the additional cost of the pay award in 2024/25. Whilst every effort will be made to contain any cost pressures that do arise within the existing budget base, Members are asked to agree, in principle, to a drawdown from the Insurance and Resource Reserve, should it be necessary, to bridge the cost gap due to the higher than budgeted pay awards.
7. As it is still very early in the 2024/25 financial year a detailed forecast position is not presented to Members in this report. However, a number of areas that will be monitored closely over the coming months are highlighted to Members below:
  - a) **Operational colleagues pay costs** - A proportion of pay for operational colleagues is based on activity levels, particularly in relation to colleagues at on-call fire stations.

This pay can fluctuate significantly from year-to-year, and although an appropriate budget has been set based on historic spend patterns, if the number of incidents or average time spent at incidents varies significantly this could have an impact on the outturn. Additionally, assumptions have been made regarding the number of in-year retirements and recruitment into vacancies. As all operational colleagues are now members of the Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) pension scheme the point at which an individual may decide to retire is much less predictable than in previous years, when most members accrued maximum pension benefits and retired at 30 years of service.

- b) **Corporate colleagues pay costs** - Although a full and final pay offer has been put forward by the Employers Side of the National Joint Council (NJC) this has not been accepted by the Trade Unions Side, so this position will be monitored closely so that potential budget implications are promptly identified. Additionally, assumptions have been made in regard to vacancy rates and the timing of recruitment into vacancies that existed at the beginning of the financial year, so any variance against these assumptions could have an impact on the outturn.
  - c) **Interest Rates** - On 9 May 2024, the Bank of England base rate was held at 5.25% - where it has been for 9 months. Market forecasts are now predicting just one or two cuts from the current rate to a low of 4.50% - 4.75% by the end of this year. The base rate has remained at this higher level, for longer than anticipated, compared to the assumptions made when the budget was set, but the speed and size of any future changes to the base rate will have an impact on the Authority's expected investment returns.
  - d) **Firefighter's pension payments (Matthews case)** - It has been confirmed that the Authority will receive a government grant (£18m) in July 2024 in relation the Matthews pension case. This grant is intended to cover the cost of pension payments to eligible individuals who opt to join the Modified Pension Scheme and will be entitled to payment of their pension benefits in 2024/25. Current expectations are that the grant allocation will far exceed the value of pension benefits that will be paid out in the 2024/25 financial year, although significant work remains ongoing in this area. Unspent grant will be returned to the Government through the Firefighters' Pension Fund top-up process in July 2025 but surplus funds will be available for investment until such time that they are required to be spent on pension payments or are required to be repaid to central Government, resulting increased investment income for 2024/25.
8. **Capital Budget** - In February 2024, Members approved a capital budget of £12.752m for 2024/25, the majority of which relates to the redevelopment of Ashford Fire Station and the Live Fire Training Facility project (£10.384m), plus £1.010m for various other estate related redevelopment works including roofing replacements and heating systems.

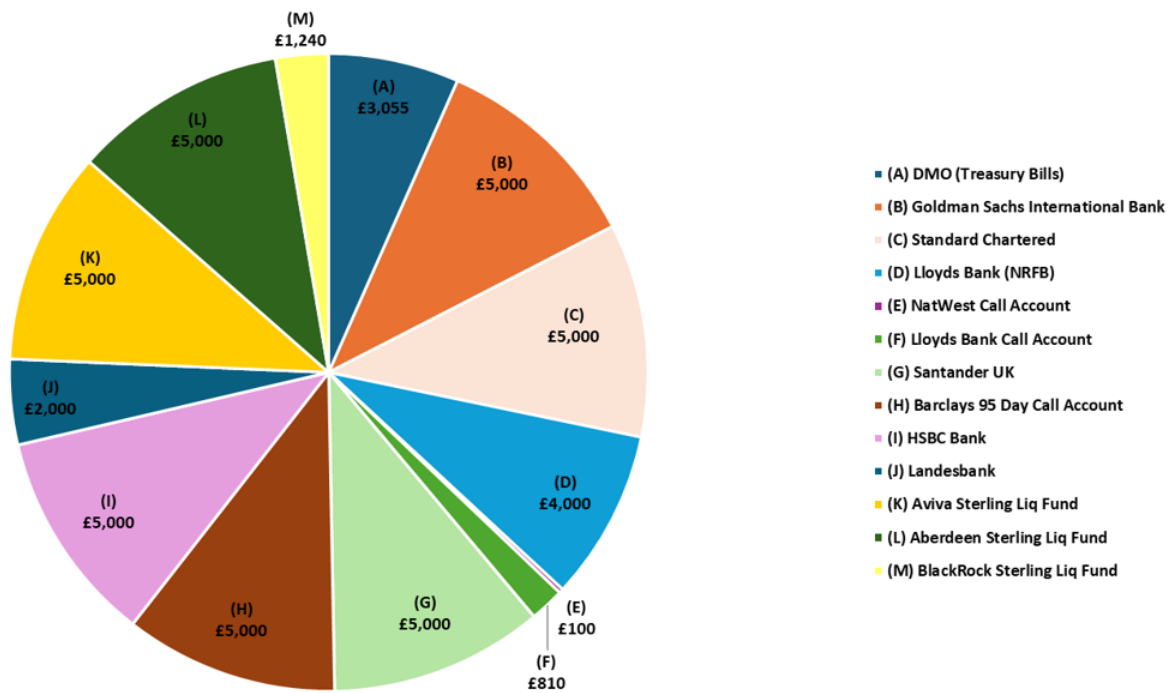
£1.358m has been allocated for a range of specialist vehicle replacements including Animal Rescue units and Driver training vehicles.

9. Since the budget was agreed, slippage on the Ashford Fire Station and Live Fire Training Facility project has meant that the budget for 2024/25 has been reduced by £1.066m, mainly due to delays in procuring a contractor for the major works. Budgets for other property related works have been increased by £432k where works have either slipped from 2023/24 (£389k) or have been brought forward from later years (£43k). In addition, the budget for the lease on the building used to carry out the vehicle servicing and maintenance function has been slipped from 2023/24 (£213k) as the accounting requirement for the recognition of such leases to be presented on the balance sheet was delayed until 2024/25 and; £95k in relation to the Mobile Data Terminals project has been slipped from 2023/24 whilst work continues in relation to the installation of the equipment on the Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) and the software on the Training Centre appliances. These increases are partly offset by a net reduction of £46k on the budgets for pool cars and specialist vehicles where budgets have been realigned between financial years.
10. **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** - Members will be aware that at this time of the year we start to review in more detail our MTFP. Work on updating spending plans and the modelling of various funding scenarios will continue over the coming months, with proposed assumptions in the development of the MTFP presented to Members at the October Authority meeting.

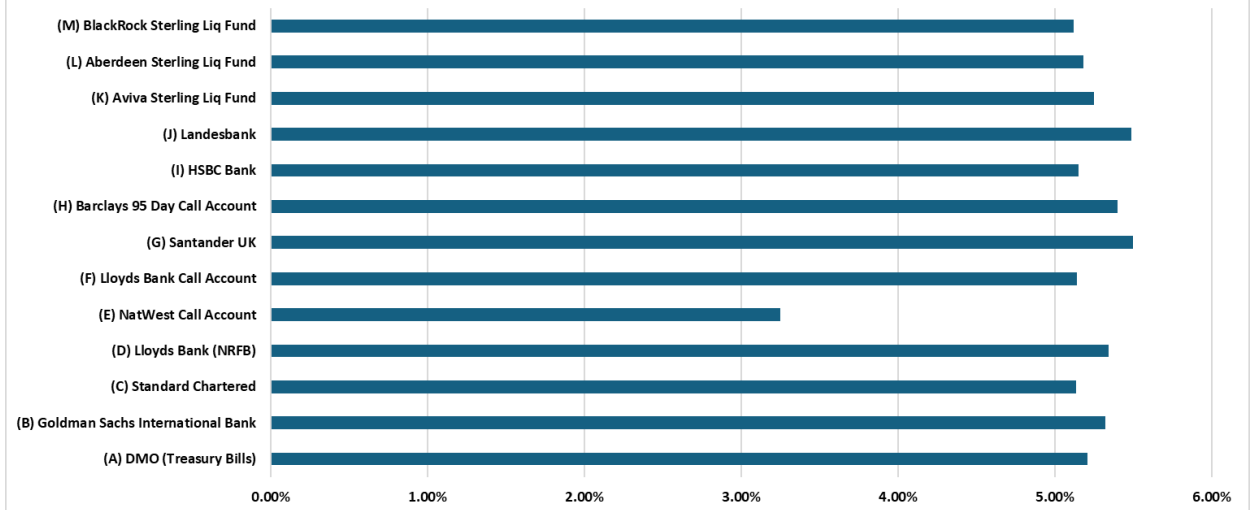
### **Treasury Update 2024/25**

11. **Treasury Management** - As at 22 May 2024, the Authority has a cash balance of £46.2m invested. The pie chart below shows the cash invested per counterparty, which has a forecast investment income for the year of £2.5m, compared to £1.7m as estimated in February 2024 when the budget was set for the year. This additional income has been forecast based on the interest that we estimate will be achieved on an additional grant we are due to receive from the government relating to the McCloud and Matthews cases. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee announced it has held the base rate at 5.25% this month. As a result, the Authority's average rate earned on cash balances has remained steady, which is currently at an average of 5.28%. The bar chart below details current interest rate levels paid on these deposits.

Cash Invested Per Counterparty as at May 2024 (£000's)



Average Interest Rate Per Counterparty as at May 2024



## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12. As the 2024/25 nationally agreed pay awards will be higher than the provision set aside in the budget, this will result in an unavoidable in-year budget pressure. Additional investment income that is likely to materialise as a result of the Matthews pension grant, may help offset the additional cost of the 2024/25 pay award. So whilst every effort will be made to contain this cost pressure within the existing revenue budget, Members are asked to agree, in principle, to a drawdown from the Insurance and Resource Reserve, should it be necessary, to bridge the funding gap at year end.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

13. Members are requested to:

13.1 Approve, in principle, to the proposed drawdown from the Insurance and Resource Reserve to fund the additional cost of the nationally agreed pay awards for 2024/25, should there be a requirement to balance the budget from reserves at the end of the financial year (paragraph 6 refers).

13.2 Note the contents of the report.

By: Chief Executive

To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2024

Subject: APPOINTMENT OF THE AUTHORITY'S INDEPENDENT PERSON (STANDARDS)

Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

Under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, the Authority must include provision for the appointment of at least one Independent Person (IP) whose views must be sought, and considered, before a decision is made on any allegation of misconduct against a Member of the Authority.

This report is seeking Members' agreement to reappoint the Authority's current Independent Person for another four-year term.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to:

1. Agree the reappointment of Jennifer Waterman, as the Authority's Independent Person, for another four-year term up to the Authority's AGM in 2028 (Paragraph 3 refers).

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

## **COMMENTS**

### **Background**

1. The Localism Act 2011 requires the Authority to appoint an Independent Person for Standards whom the Monitoring Officer can seek advice from when they are in receipt of an alleged breach of the Kent Code of Conduct.
2. It is essential that the public has confidence in the high standards of local government and with that the transparency on the mechanisms in place for dealing with any allegations of misconduct against its Councillors. The Independent Person's role brings a valuable, fair and independent perspective to the standards process.
3. It can often be a challenge to find suitable candidates to take on the role as an Independent Person as the role is essentially done on a voluntary basis, albeit travel expenses are paid. There are also parameters set out in legislation regarding who and who may not be appointed into the role. The Authority's current Independent Person has served the Authority well since her appointment. Taking these factors into consideration Members agreement is sought to reappoint Jennifer Waterman as the Authority's Independent Person for another four-year term.
4. Although there has not been the need in the past for this Authority's Independent Person to deal with any allegations against its elected Members, there is a requirement that they regularly liaise with officers, attend meetings where appropriate and keep in touch with local developments and best practice on standards issues.
5. Members will also recall that the Authority works in collaboration with Kent County Council so should our Independent Person not be available or has a conflict of interest, then the current Independent Person for KCC would substitute and vice versa. The proposal for this arrangement will remain unchanged for the future.

### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

### **RECOMMENDATION**

7. Members are requested to:
  - 7.1 Agree the reappointment of Jennifer Waterman, as the Authority's Independent Person, for another four-year term up to the Authority's AGM in 2028 (Paragraph 3 refers).

By: Chief Executive  
To: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority – 5 July 2024  
Subject: APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER  
Classification: Unrestricted

## **FOR DECISION**

### **SUMMARY**

It is a statutory requirement for Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA) to appoint a Monitoring Officer to carry out the responsibilities set out under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

At the Authority meeting in February 2024, Members were advised that the current Monitoring Officer at the time had given notice of his intention to stand down from the role with effect from 31 March 2024. As a result of this decision Members agreed for the Clerk to the Authority and Director of Finance to hold discussions with Mid Kent Legal Services (MKLS) regarding a monitoring officer provision. The Chair of the Authority has been kept updated on progress. Those discussions have now concluded, and Members are requested to approve the recommendation for the appointment of a Monitoring Officer to the Authority.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the appointment of Claudette Valmond, Head of Mid Kent Legal Services as the Authority's Monitoring Officer under the conditions defined within the Service Level Agreement, attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
2. Agree that the provision with MKLS will be reviewed annually to ensure that performance is being met by both parties and subject to agreeing further collaboration, a recommendation comes back to the Authority for a potential extension of the contract when the time is right.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Clerk to the Authority – Marie Curry  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01622 692121 Ext 8206  
EMAIL: marie.curry@kent.fire-uk.org  
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

## COMMENTS

### Background

1. It is a statutory requirement for Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA) to appoint a Monitoring Officer to carry out the responsibilities set out under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Monitoring Officer's responsibility is to ensure that the Authority, its officers and elected Members maintain the highest standards of conduct in all that they do.
2. At the Authority meeting in February 2024, Members were advised that the current Monitoring Officer at the time had given notice of his intention to stand down from the role with effect from 31 March 2024. Given the statutory legislation placed on authorities to have a Monitoring Officer, it is essential that the Authority makes every effort to source an officer responsible for its legal governance. Members were also updated at this meeting on the conversations thus far with Mid Kent Legal Services (MKLS) and as such a decision was taken to allow those conversations to continue, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, ensuring any recommendation is brought back to the Authority for ratification.
3. Members will recall from those discussions that MKLS is part of a partnership which was formed in 2008 by Maidstone Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Swale Borough Council. The services delivered through the partnership (named Mid Kent Services) work together to improve service delivery across Kent. The partnership already has in place a Monitoring Officer provision which they share amongst themselves.
4. It is pleasing to report that talks have now concluded with MKLS along with a consensus on a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and associated fee. The SLA is attached at **Appendix 1** to this report for Members' information. It is recommended to Members, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, that Claudette Valmond, Head of Mid Kent Legal Services is appointed as this Authority's Monitoring Officer initially for a period of two years. This timeframe will allow Claudette and her team to access the level of work required to support the Authority, in addition to the workload associated with the monitoring officer provisions they share as a partnership. The contract will be reviewed annually between the Authority and MKLS to ensure that performance is being met by both parties. Should there be any decision to continue the collaboration between the Authority and MKLS by extending the contract beyond the two years then this will come back to Members for prior agreement.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5. The fee for the Monitoring Officer provision with Mid Kent Legal Services is £8.5k per annum. A provision already exists within budget for the services of a Monitoring Officer. No payments are made directly to the appointee in respect of this work.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Members are requested to:
  - 6.1 Approve the appointment of Claudette Valmond, Head of Mid Kent Legal Services as the Authority's Monitoring Officer under the conditions defined within the Service Level Agreement, attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
  - 6.2 Agree that the provision with MKLS will be reviewed annually to ensure that performance is being met by both parties and subject to agreeing further collaboration, a recommendation comes back to the Authority for a potential extension of the contract when the time is right.

**DATED**

**2024**

**Service Level Agreement**

**Between**

**Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority**

**and**

**Swale Borough Council**

**for the provision of a Monitoring Officer Service**



enforcing agencies.

**Register of Interests** – means a record of any financial interests or benefits received which might be reasonably considered to influence the actions of any Member of the Authority

## **1. Definition of Service Requirement**

- 1.1 Every Local Authority has a legal duty to appoint a Monitoring Officer. The duties of this post are set out under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and amended by schedule 5, paragraph 24 of the Local Government Act 2000.
- 1.2 This role is an appointment of the Authority and has the specific duty to ensure that the Authority, its Officers and elected Members maintain the highest standards of conduct in all that they do. The Monitoring Officer will be able to advise and support on conflict of interest issues, support in difficult circumstances and investigate any formal complaints. The Monitoring Officer should also have the appropriate skills to mediate, counsel and in addition to the formal grievance processes, can intervene on an informal basis which can have a positive impact on the culture of the Authority. This Agreement sets out the provision for the requirement of this service.
- 1.3 The term shall be two years from 25 April 2024 (the Commencement Date), to be reviewed annually to ensure that performance is being met by both Parties. The Parties agree that the term will be extended by a further two years if both Parties agree. It will be procured under the provisions set out in the Kent Combination Scheme Order 1997.

## **2. Specification of Service Provider Responsibilities**

- 2.1 The Service Provider shall provide a Monitoring Officer Role to the Authority as specified below:
  - i) To report to the Authority in any case where they believe any proposal, decision or omission by the Authority may constitute a reportable incident (being any matter which, in their opinion, has given rise to or is likely to or would give rise to any illegality, maladministration or breach of statutory code under Sections 5 and 5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989);
  - ii) To investigate any matter which they have reason to believe may constitute, or where they have received an allegation that a matter may constitute, a reportable conduct issue in relation to a Member;
  - iii) To advise on any changes which may be needed to the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members; to advise Members on interests and conduct; and to advise on the grant of non-pecuniary dispensations;
  - iv) To exercise the Authority's powers to grant dispensations to Members under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011;
  - v) To maintain the Register of Interest of all Members from Constituent Authorities under the Kent Combination Scheme Order 1997;
  - vi) To help ensure that Members and officers of the Authority are fully aware of their obligations in relation to probity;

- vii) To regularly review the Authority's Standing Orders, Regulations, Codes and procedures to ensure they are up-to-date and comply with statutory and best practice requirements;
- viii) To review all reports submitted to the Authority and respond back to the Clerk to the Authority, in a timely manner, confirming that no proposals or decisions detailed within those reports breach the law or amount to maladministration;
- ix) To provide an annual monitoring report to the Authority on any activities undertaken in line with this Agreement as well as attend at least one Authority meeting per municipal calendar year;
- x) To hold regular review meetings with either the Chief Executive or the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, and the Clerk to the Authority to identify areas where the Authority can be improved or better protected and to review best practice between both Parties;
- xi) To respond to any correspondence sent by the Authority within five working days unless that correspondence is marked as urgent and the response is required within 24 hours;
- xii) To provide advice to Members and Officers, in a timely manner, as required in pursuit of a legal decision. This will include timely responses to a request for specific information in relation to the statutory requirements of formally closing the financial accounts each year.

### **3. Service Purchasers Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The Authority shall provide/undertake the following:**

- i) The right of access to all relevant documents and information held by or on behalf of the Authority, including documents and information held by any Officer or Member of the Authority as set out in its Publication and Retention Scheme, and the published privacy notice on Investigations by other agencies;
- ii) The right of access to any meetings of Officers or Members (or both) of the Authority, whether or not such meetings include any other persons;
- iii) The right to require any Officer or Member of the Authority, or any contractor of the Authority, to provide an explanation of any matter under investigation;
- iv) A right to report to the Authority, including a right to present a written report and to attend and advise orally;
- v) The right to require the assistance of any Officer of the Authority in carrying out an investigation;
- vi) A power to agree a local resolution to any complaint of maladministration or of breach of the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members, in consultation with the Chief Executive, subject to subsequent report to the Authority;
- vii) The right of access to the Chief Executive and to the Director, Finance and Corporate Services;

- viii) The right, after consultation with the Chief Executive, to notify the Police, the Authority's auditors and other regulatory agencies of their concerns in respect of any matter and to provide those agencies with information and documents to assist them with their statutory functions;
- ix) The right to obtain, at the Authority's expense, legal advice on any matter which they believe may be a reportable incident, and sufficient financial resource for this.

#### **4. Fees**

##### **4.1 The Authority agrees to;**

- i) Pay the annual fee of £8,500.00 for the services of the Monitoring Officer (for the first two year term) on 25 October each year. If the contract is extended beyond the two year term, then the fee will be renegotiated.
- ii) Agree in advance with the Monitoring Officer any work that is deemed to be outside this Agreement at a cost of an agreed hourly rate and prior to any work being undertaken.

#### **5. Sub-contracting**

- 5.1 The Service Provider shall not assign, sub-contract or in any other way dispose of the agreement or any part of it without prior approval from the Authority.

#### **6. Termination**

- 6.1 Either Party may terminate this agreement at any time by giving three months prior written notice.

**IN WITNESS** whereof this Agreement has been executed by the Parties in accordance with their respective constitutions:

Signed for and on behalf of  
**Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority**

.....  
Authorised Signatory

.....  
Print Name of Authorised Signatory

Signed for and on behalf of  
**Swale Borough Council**

.....  
Authorised Signatory

.....  
Print Name of Authorised Signatory



# Pensions in the Fire & Rescue Service

## Authority Meeting

5 July 2024



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# What will we cover...

- Workplace pension schemes available to fire service colleagues
- Brief look at some specific aspects of each pension scheme
- Arrangements in place for managing each pension scheme
- Recent national legal cases (McCloud and Matthews)
- Employer discretions (decisions requiring member approval)
- Questions



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# What workplace pension schemes are available to colleagues in the Fire & Rescue Service?



## Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS)

*The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014*  
(37.6% of pensionable pay / 2024/25 Budget = £12.5m)



## Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

*The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013*  
(17.5% of pensionable pay / 2024/25 Budget = £3.1m)



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# How is the Firefighters' Pension Scheme managed?



- ☐ The Scheme Manager
- ☐ Local Pensions Board
- ☐ Administrators
- ☐ Firefighters' Pension Fund



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# Firefighters' Pension Fund Account – Not that exciting!



- All FRAs were required to establish a Firefighters' Pension Fund Account in 2006
- Separate account from the FRA's operating budgets (rules on what can be charged to the Pension Fund Account)
- Pays out pension benefits (lump sums and ongoing annual pensions)
- Collects income (employer and employee pension contributions)
- Annual deficit funded by grant from government (c. £14m-£16m in recent years) to balance the account to nil each year



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# How is the Local Government Pension Scheme managed?



- ☐ Kent Pension Fund
- ☐ Pension Fund Committee
- ☐ Local Pension Board
- ☐ Annual Report and Accounts



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# National Legal Cases

- McCloud / Sargeant – Wholetime and On-call / Retained  
*(also affects some members of the LGPS – but to a much lesser extent)*
- Matthews – On-call / Retained



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# Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) Final Salary to CARE

## McCloud / Sargeant Legal Case



- ❑ 1 April 2015 – final salary schemes (1992 FPS and 2006 FPS) closed to new joiners:
  - All new joiners enrolled into the 2015 FPS CARE scheme
  - Existing members moved to 2015 FPS CARE scheme immediately or on a later date based on their age
- ❖ **McCloud Age Discrimination Legal Case**
- ❑ Majority of those members that were moved to the 2015 FPS CARE scheme are now eligible to return to their final salary scheme for the 'remedy' period 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2022
- ❑ Membership for all will be in the 2015 FPS CARE scheme from 1 April 2022



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# Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) – On-call / Retained

## Matthews Legal Case



- ❑ Retained Firefighter's weren't given access to a pension scheme until 2006
  - Outcome of original legal case gave backdated access to eligible members to the 2006 (Modified) Pension Scheme back to July 2000
  - Options exercise to rectify cases for those affected took place between 2014 and 2015
- ❑ Subsequent legal case to grant access to a pension scheme back to start date of retained employment
  - Second options exercise to rectify those affected to be undertaken from October 2023
  - FRA has 18 months to complete the exercise



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# Pension Scheme Discretions



Within each pension scheme there are a number of decisions which are left to the Authority to agree the policy to be applied.

- **LGPS** - 5 discretions require a written statement (next slide)
- **FPS** - Over 50 discretions in each scheme (1992, 2006, 2015) - 159 in total
  - Many overlap
  - Most superseded by the 2015 scheme when introduced in April 2015 (52 discretions)



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# LGPS Employer Discretions

**The Fire Authority must have a written statement on five discretions, setting out its position:**

- 1. Shared Cost Additional Pension Contributions (SCAPC)- Regulation 16 (2)(e) and (4)(d)**
  - The Authority will not operate a SCAPC where an employee wishes to buy extra annual pension. However, this does not apply where a scheme member wishes to buy back a period of authorised unpaid leave (e.g. child-related leave where the Authority would contribute 2/3rds of the cost if the election is made within the required timeframe).
- 2. Flexible Retirement – Regulation 30 (6)**
  - It is the Authority's policy to provide consent to consider all flexible retirement requests in line with the Authority's Flexible Retirement Policy (i.e. the request is evaluated against the Services ability to accommodate the arrangement). Each case will be considered on its merits by the Corporate Management Board.
- 3. Waiving of actuarial reductions – Regulation 30 (8)**
- 4. Award of additional pension – Regulation 31**
- 5. Waiving of actuarial reductions pertaining to Rule of 85 – Para 2 (2) of Schedule 2 TP Regulations**
  - It is not the Authority's general policy to apply discretions 3-5, unless there are clear financial or operational advantages to the Authority. Each case will be considered on its merits by the Director Finance, Director HR and Chief Executive.



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# FPS Employer Discretions - key / recently raised discretions

## 1. Employer initiated retirement – Regulation 62

- The Scheme Manager can allow for the early payment of pension benefits without an early payment reduction. The Fire Authority would be required to transfer an amount equivalent to the difference into the Pension Fund Account.

## 2. Request for acceptance of a transfer payment – Regulation 141

- A scheme member can request a transfer payment from a non-occupational pension scheme within one-year of becoming an active member. The Scheme Manager has discretion to extend this time-period.

## 3. Withdrawal of all or part of a person's pension during any period of (re)employment – Rule K4

- A scheme member's pension should be abated if they are (re)employed by the Fire Authority. There is a discretion to not abate the pension, but the Fire Authority must transfer an amount equivalent to that which could have been abated into the Pension Fund.

## 4. Cessation of payment of a child's pension – Rule D5 (1) and (2)

- A child's pension must be stopped when they leave full time education. There is a discretion to allow the reinstatement of the pension if a child later re-joins full time education.

## 5. Repayment of Widows Pension – Rule C9

- A widow's pension must be stopped on re-marriage. There is a discretion to allow the reinstatement of the widow's pension if the marriage is dissolved or the other party to it dies.



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# Member decision - Discretion principles

Members are asked to agree:

1. The application of any discretion will require the collective approval of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of HR;
2. If the net cost of applying a discretion exceeds £50k per year on an individual case basis, this will require **prior** Member approval;
3. All other financial commitments will be approved in line with the existing schemes of delegation.



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# Questions?



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# C1 Activity update

1. Operational incident
2. Building Safety activity

July 2024

For further information please contact:

Mark Rist, Director - Response and Resilience

Jon Quin, Director - Prevention, Protection and Customer Engagement



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1. Operational incident – Fire in historic Grade II listed house, incident 764 - 08/03/2024, Lughorse Lane, Hunton
2. Building Safety – Former Nasons department store, 46-47 High Street, Canterbury



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# Operational incident

Fire in historic Grade II listed house

Incident 764 – 08/03/2024 Lughorse Lane, Hunton



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# Overview and Attendance

First call: 21.01 hrs on 08/03/2024

Stop message: 17.39 hrs on 11/03/2024

## Attendance

16 fire engines

Height vehicle

Bulk water carrier

Command support unit

Technical Rescue Team plus drone

Volunteer Response Team

Fire in the first floor and the roof of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century property.

Cause believed to be electrical fault in roof.

Believed to be the setting for Jane Austen's novel 'Pride and Prejudice'.



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# Building Safety activity

Former Nasons department store  
46-47 High Street, Canterbury, CT1 2SB



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# Nasons: Vacant Department Store

RAV-Int Report. Fire safety concerns identified: November 2022

- Vacant department store in the middle of Canterbury High Street
- High-risk area due to the potential for fire spread between buildings
- Reports of homeless sleeping within the premises
- Fire setting activity, due to time of year within the premises
- Fire safety arrangements within the premises had been disabled due to no occupiers



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# Risks of harm from fire to the following : **Public / Operational Crews and Partner Agencies (First Responders) / Children / Homeless Occupants**

- Six entrance points to the building on High Street, Jewry Lane, and St. Margaret's Street
- Possible hostility towards crews upon arrival
- Large number of syringes and human excrement around the building
- Water leaks have damaged floors, causing unseen voids
- Previous fires have been set on the ground floor
- Complicated layout with basements, mezzanine floors, and multiple staircases
- Rapid fire spread conditions internally
- Rapid fire spread potential between buildings due to age and construction
- Open lift shafts
- Sprinklers have been discharged and are no longer active due to damage



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# KFRS Actions

- Coordinated full organisational and partner responses, which included:
- Technical rescue support: facilitated RIT entering premises to gather intel and SSRI detail; fitted smoke detectors to protect the homeless; and facilitated the Safeguarding Team to work with occupants
- Multiple operational crews are undertaking ongoing familiarisation visits
- Education Team: Highlighting to local schools the dangers within the premises
- Premises ownership research to ensure the ability to secure and make safe premises and inform RP of legal duties
- BS Liaison with the CCC planning, housing, and homelessness teams to highlight concerns and facilitate rehousing options



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# Internal:



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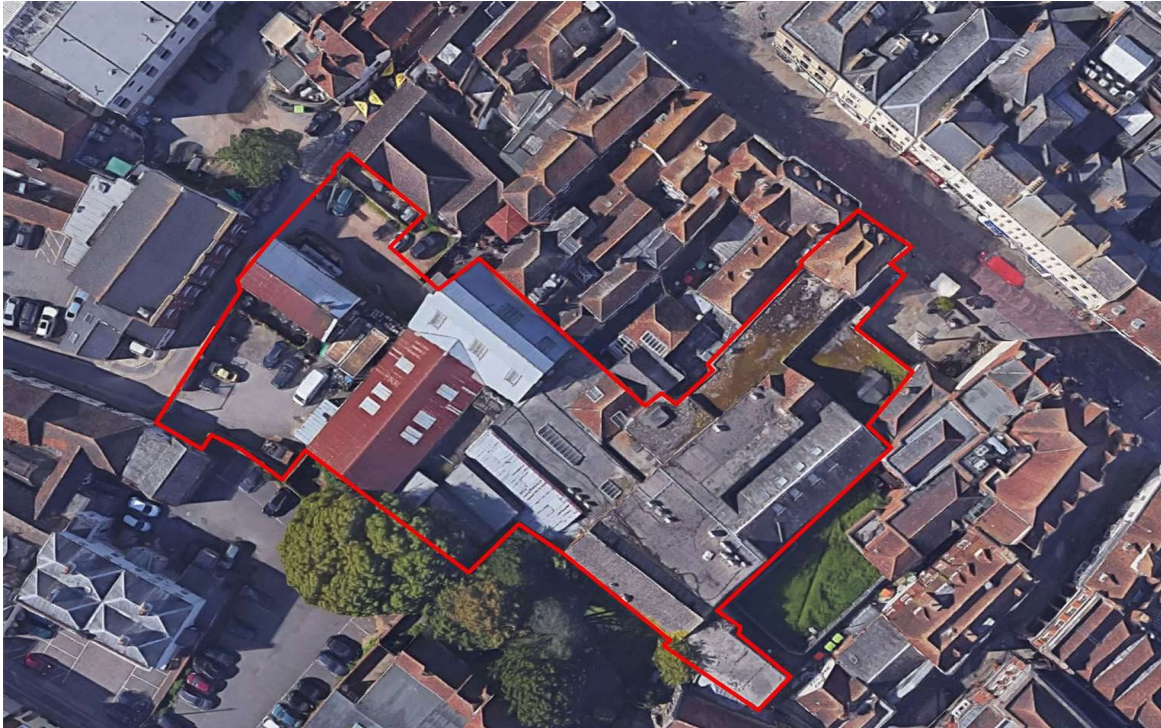
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# Premises Footprint and Future Vision



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# 3D images of premises:

- [Space Detail \(matterport.com\)](https://matterport.com)

## Successful Outcomes Include:

- Vulnerable residents protected
- Safeguarding regulatory responsibility of the service discharged
- Engagement with local businesses in the surrounding area
- Education of young people in local schools on risks from derelict premises
- Derelict premises process introduced and developed by the service
- SSRI / 3D scan, and operational teams fully aware of premises and risks presented
- Multiagency engagement and approach to secure premises and rehome occupants
- Regulatory responsibilities for premises owner clarified; premises made and remain secure
- Premises owner shared the future vision for premises; early interaction with the Service Fire Engineering Team



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# **Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority**

## **C2. Information Update 5th July 2024**



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# C2 A. Inspection update

July 2024

For further information please contact:

Nicola Harryman, Head of Data and Intelligence and KFRS Service Liaison Officer for HMICFRS



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1. At the time of writing this update we are still awaiting the publication of the thematic inspection report into misconduct; the overarching anonymised report is expected to be published in the summer.
2. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services have published 15 inspection reports from round three of the programme. Avon and Buckinghamshire are now in the enhanced level of monitoring status.
3. The annual assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England; State of Fire and Rescue was published on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024; [State of Fire and Rescue](#). The key findings from this report are:
  - a) Round three inspections have continued to find deficiencies in the performance of services and are finding that aspects of some services' performance are getting worse. Grades have fallen in some services in relation to protection, multi-agency incidents, values and culture and getting the right people with the right skills
  - b) There are four systematic challenges facing the sector, the last two are new observations; the Government must press ahead with reform, values and culture and the management of misconduct needs to urgently improve, fire and rescue service leaders need to take a strategic approach to service improvements and HMICFRS need additional powers to continue to make communities safer.
  - c) The additional powers HMICFRS are seeking are; a legal requirement for fire and rescue authorities to publish a response to inspection reports, fire and rescue authorities should be able to request a commissioned inspection and inspection powers should be extended to allow enforcement of recommendations.
4. Our round three inspection date commences 17th February 2025, reality testing will start w/c 24th March. The finalised report is expected to be published early August 2025.



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# C2 B. Performance update

July 2024

For further information please contact:

Nicola Harryman, Head of Data and Intelligence and KFRS Service Liaison Officer for HMICFRS



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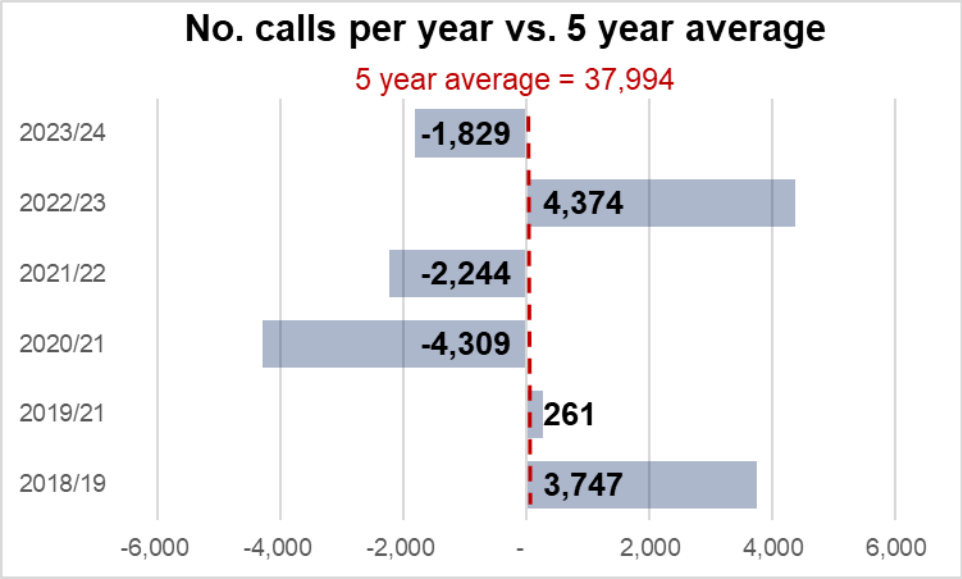
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# Overview of the Authority's performance for financial year 2023/24

A full performance outturn report for the 2023/24 financial year can be found in C2 Appendix 1

## Emergency Calls

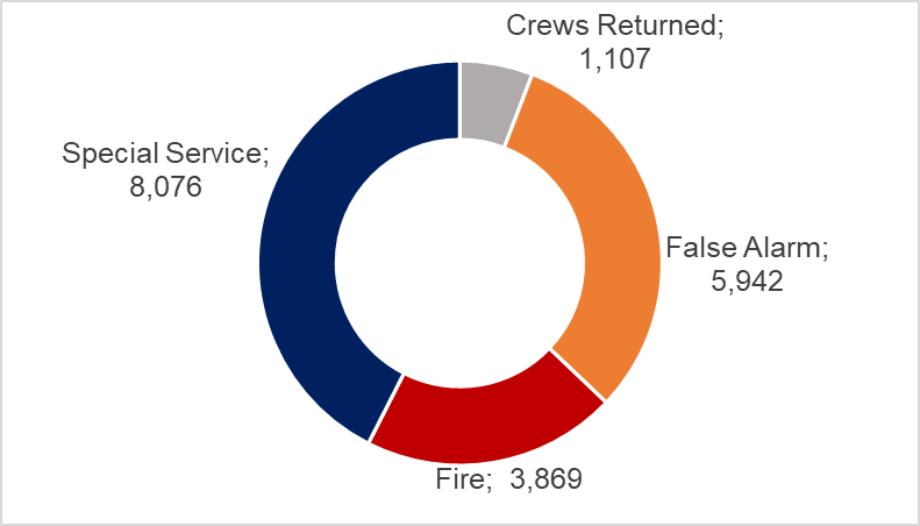
In 2023/24, 36,165 emergency calls were received in Authority's control room. It is evident that call volumes vary year to year. Low call volumes in 2020/21 and 2021/22 were affected by the pandemic. The high numbers recorded in 2018/19 and 2022/23 are linked to hot summers increasing outdoor fires and related calls.



## Incidents Attended

The calls received into the Control room resulted in mobilising to 18,994 incidents during 2023/24

- The majority of fires attended were outdoor and rubbish fires
- 20% of special service incidents were to gain entry, and a further 19% were to assist other agencies.
- Most of the false alarms attended were to automatic fire alarms in domestic properties.



Please note: these figures include over the border attendances which are not included in performance indicator reporting. They will not match the totals shown on subsequent slides

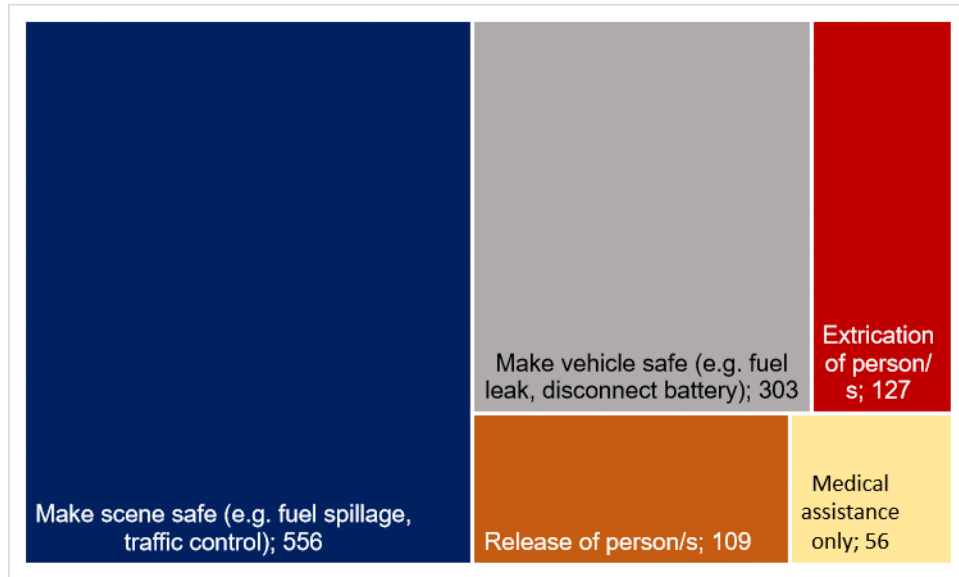


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## Road Traffic Collisions

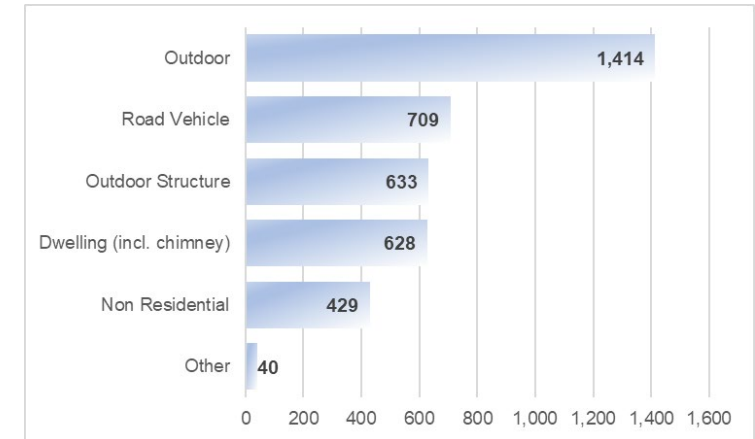
- 1,153 road traffic collisions have been attended (excluding those where no action was needed). The vast majority of incidents have needed our attendance to make either the scene or the vehicle safe only.



- As a result of these incidents 30 people have died and 116 have been seriously injured.

## Fire Incidents

- Attended 3,853 fires of all types; which is 26% less than the year before. 2022/23 had a record number of fires from the hot weather however.



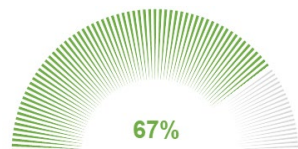
- Attended 481 accidental fires in the home (not including chimney fires); the lowest number ever recorded.
- Accidental fires account for 59.5% of the total fires attended. As a result of these fires, three people have died (one vehicle fire and two house fires), eight people suffered serious injuries and 81 people have suffered 'slight' fire-related injuries.
- One person has also died in a suicide incident involving fire and five people have been seriously injured in deliberate fires



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## Response times



Life-threatening incidents within 10 minutes

Average time to from call to attendance - 10 minutes 56 seconds



Non-life threatening incidents within 15 minutes

Average time from call to attendance - 10 minutes 51 seconds

## Availability

So far this year the average number of fire engines available has been 32 during the day (9am-6pm) and 47 in the evening (6pm to 9am). We aim to have 32-44 fire engines available, known as our standard operating level. We often exceed this level at night.



3.4% of all contracted hours have been lost due to sickness. Operational colleagues have lost 3.5% of contracted hours to sickness and employees in Customer Service teams have lost 3.2%.



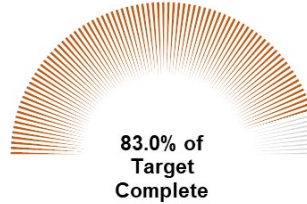
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## Home Fire Safety Visits and Safe & Well Visits



24,119 Home Safety Visits.



11,623 Safe and Well Visits

## Building Safety

- 99.5% of building consultations received (2,252 of 2,263) have been completed within 21 days.
- 2,184 audits have been carried out in total so far this year, 1,232 of which were in business premises in line with the Authority's risk-based inspection programme.



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# C2 C. Response and Resilience update

July 2024

For further information please contact:  
Mark Rist, Director – Response and Resilience



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# Strategic Exercise

- On 1<sup>st</sup> May we conducted Exercise Electri – a Service level exercise testing our response to an explosion involving a firefighter fatality.
- This tested our command arrangements across the organisation as well as testing our procedures for such events.
- Colleagues from all teams were represented.
- An exercise debrief is currently being prepared.



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# On call review

- Our on-call firefighters form a fundamental part of our capability.
- Changes in society, demographics, and legislation has led to challenges maintaining on-call team availability (national issue).
- We commissioned an external review of our position and issues with our on-call.
- We are starting a fundamental review of the on-call, taking place over the next 18 months, including contracts, training, recruitment, engagement etc.



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# Recruitment highlights

## Completed

- 8 Fire Control Operators
- 3 Group Managers
- 4 Area Managers
- 1 Assistant Director - Neil Griffiths (external from West Midlands Fire Service)

## Planned

- 32 WT FF roles 2024/25
- 4 Group Managers
- On call FFs

Significant number of colleagues in new roles providing opportunity for new learning and ideas.



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# Mobile Data Terminals

- Completed the rollout of new MDTs to all frontline firefighting appliances
- These devices communicate vital incident information, including risk information
- New devices have increased reliability
- New in-house developed software co-created with colleagues at stations
- Provides better information for firefighters
- Directly contributes to increased firefighter safety



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# Vehicles and equipment

- Final procurement stages of:
  - **Lightweight fire kit** – improved wellbeing
  - **Ground based firefighting robot** – to reduce times firefighters have to enter risk areas
- Delivered:
  - **5 new rescue pumps** – improved reliability
  - **5 new water safety units** – better off road capability
  - **Hydrant technician vehicles** – improved working area
  - **Volunteer Response Team welfare vehicle** – better facilities to support customers at incidents



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# Water supply risks

- Pressure reduction techniques on water network resulting in areas with restricted supply
- Can impact water available for firefighting
- Risk recorded as “Severe” on Service’s Risk Register (A&G Jan 2024)
- Mr Maple (as A&G Chair) wrote to local authority planning departments to raise awareness
- Factored into CRMP to consider changes to our prevention, protection, response and resilience arrangements
- Ongoing engagement with water companies and local planning to understand risk locations and plan accordingly
- Raised to National Fire Chiefs Council as national risk – producing position statement for government



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# Marauding Terror Attack Assurance Report

- National Resilience Team conducted assurance visit to assess our MTA capability
- High assurance rating with 96% of assurance focus areas rated good or outstanding
- Just 1 area for improvement identified – action plan in place and agreed by National Resilience



**NFCC**  
National  
Resilience



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# Training centre refurbishment

- Improved security and access arrangements
- Redecoration, carpets, equipment storage
- New meeting room and hot desks
- Improved building flow



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# C2 D. Protection, Prevention and Engagement Update

July 2024

For further information please contact:

Jon Quinn, Director – Protection, Prevention and Customer Engagement



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# Building Safety

- Our first two building safety inspectors have been registered on the Fire Risk Auditors Register through the Contextualised Auditors Register framework. This demonstrates enhanced assurance around competency and provides additional recognition through the Engineering Council and the Institution of Fire Engineers. A further 8 inspectors are currently on the application pathway, with intention to support all colleagues to become registered



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# Customer Safety

- Education teams have successfully recruited to all available positions post restructure
- The targeted school education programme launched this academic year and prioritises those most at risk from fire related injury
- A Medway fire cadet cohort began in March 2024, with 16 young people recruited to the programme



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- New area-based home fire safety visit targeting has replaced the previous priority data model. This allows us to target at a post code level. We're focusing on the highest risk profiles – targeting 15,000 households per year, which will be achieved with 10,000 allocated to stations and 5,000 to the HFSV Task Force. In addition, the Safe and Well visit target has been set at 10,000 visits
- Working with the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board to review the multi-agency self-neglect and hoarding policy and making plans to ensure initial professionals meetings are held when we are the identifying agency
- In March 2024 the Safe and Well and safeguarding teams hosted an Open Learning session for the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB) to help partner agencies increase their knowledge of potential fire risks, how to identify them in someone's home



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# Community Insights & Partnerships

- Completed 9 focus groups as part of the CRMP consultation (November 23 – January 24); which gathered diverse views from seldom heard community groups and businesses
- Completed research to inform the next public safety campaign on smoke alarms. This identified need to encourage people to check the replace-by date and replace out of date alarms
- Phase 2 customer insight research project will focus on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours around the disposal of batteries



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# Engagement

## Campaigns

- Our 'Make the Right Call' water safety campaign has been launched and will run until September 2024. The campaign aims to educate runners and walkers about calling 999 for the fire service if they see someone in trouble in a lake, river, or other area of inland water in Kent and Medway.
- As part of the campaign metal signs with the key message have been put up in water rescue hotspots across the county, and a wide range of digital tactics are being used to reach target audiences, including influencer marketing and Spotify advertising.
- We are developing plans for a smoke alarm campaign, set to go live in autumn/winter 2024, which will focus on expiry dates as well as regular testing of smoke alarms. An out-of-date smoke alarm will be less effective at detecting smoke – even if the 'test' button is still working.



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- Publication of second edition of “response” magazine aimed at firefighters on station who do not have such readily-accessible access to online communications. With a mind to make them feel more a part of the wider organisation.
- Relaunch of the identity of our previous internal Wellbeing information resource called “It’s Ok to talk” to “You Matter” with a new look and feel and reorganisation of information of the support available to put colleagues at the centre.
- A new identity for KFRS recruitment is being developed, called 'Love What You Do'. The concept focuses on colleague stories and perspectives, why they love what they do, and an emphasis on inclusion and diversity. As part of this work, we’re also developing how we present ourselves and our offering at career fairs.



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- We have successfully delivered three Fire Station 'Spring Open Day' events at Eastchurch, Dover and Marden - each event selling out of their allocated tickets online. We had very positive feedback following the events around friendly and helpful staff and volunteers, organisation of the events and the learning children took away with them.
- Planning is underway for a full summer of activity including three summer open days at Ramsgate, Paddock Wood and Thames-side fire stations. We'll be attending Pride events at Margate, Medway and Canterbury and also the Kent Police Open Day weekend.
- We're also trialling a new concept of holding a fire station open day in a public space in areas of great need to increase accessibility and visibility to a wider audience. 'The Neighbourhood Meet and Greet' events will be held in Victoria Park - Ashford, Minnis Bay - Thanet, New Romney and Shepherdswell near Canterbury. The events will be a multi-agency approach and be held during the week and after school to capture a different audience.

join us for a...

# neighbourhood meet and greet



Meet your local firefighters and other emergency services

**Thursday 13 June 2024**  
**3pm to 6pm**

**St Martin's Field, New Romney, TN28**

BSL interpreter  
available



learn to  
stay safe,  
fun activities,  
refreshments,  
arts and  
crafts

Scan here  
to get your  
tickets  
or visit our  
website

Scan me!



[www.kent.fire-uk.org/newromney](http://www.kent.fire-uk.org/newromney)

Free entry on the day but to guarantee your place please book  
tickets – it helps keep everyone safe



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# Volunteers

- Between January and April this year the Volunteer Response Team (VRT) has provide support with welfare, salvage, insurance liaison at 46 incidents and supported 70 customers.
- Volunteer Response Team (VRT) welfare vehicle is now officially on the run and is already supporting customers to a far greater standard through a safe comfortable seating space with area to provide welfare provisions away from the incident. This vehicle will support the VRT alongside the smaller welfare car which can be used for relevant incidents.
- The volunteers have supported over 130 events between Jan-April 2024 across Kent and Medway sharing key messages around fire safety, testing smoke alarms and water safety along with engaging with children to ensure they know to call 999 in an emergency.



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# Customer Experience and Support

## Focus to date

- Fire and Rescue Control Centre Phase 1 and 2 Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) recommendations now being taken forward
- Safe and Well Call Representative Phase 1 CJM – ‘Colleague Experience’ recommendations with team for consideration
- Roll out of ‘How to put customers first’ training being facilitated by our Customer Ambassadors to all Internal Services Teams. On track to be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024
- Engagement at all Internal Services team meetings, raising awareness of CX and the services offered
- Creation of a CX Taskforce to support our Internal Service Teams implement the recommendations from iESE’s reviews on internal customer service and ordering
- Working to improve the external customer feedback process to enable us to collect more relevant and meaningful feedback to aid service improvements.



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# Customer Experience and Support

## Next 12-24 month focus

- Fire and Rescue Control Centre Phase 3 and 4 to commence – in line with Programme timelines
- Safe and Well Call Representatives Phase 2 to commence – Internal Customer Journey Mapping
- Engage with our Internal Service teams to support them in applying CJM and Lean methodologies to help streamline and improve processes as well as develop strong customer focused procedures
- Embed better collaboration amongst teams to identify further areas of improvements.



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# Customer Experience and Support

Next 12-24 month focus

- Develop our existing Customer Ambassadors to further support with CX initiatives
- Update the 'How to put customers first' training materials to allow rollout to our operational colleagues
- Design and deliver a programme of training and supporting material across the Service to enhance the support to our internal and external customers
- Establish metrics to measure the success and impact of customer experience enhancements
- Research relevant CX memberships to identify learning opportunities
- Continue to embed a customer centric culture across the Service so it becomes an integral part of day to day business.



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# Customer Feedback



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# Compliments received in 2023/24

- Customers are actively encouraged, via surveys, to provide feedback on the services they have received from the Authority.
- The number of compliments received has plateaued this year. However, it is important to note that the Authority continues to receive far more compliments than complaints (129 versus 66 respectively).
- Operational incidents continue to make up most compliments (68 in total) with Home Fire Safety Visits (28 in total) and events and campaigns (10 in total) also attracting compliments.
- It is pleasing to note the comments received of colleagues going above and beyond to meet or exceed customers' needs and expectations.

**Table 1: Number of formal compliments received**

Year	Compliments Received
2023/24	129
2022/23	129
2021/22	96



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# Complaints received in 2023/24

- The number of complaints also increased slightly in 2023/24 in comparison with recent years, although the number of founded complaints continues to remain very low for an Authority of this size.
- As with previous years, the most frequent reason for a founded complaint continues to be driving and there are no other trends that can be identified from the low number of complaints.
- The process for complaining was made easier as part of the new Customer Feedback Policy, which may account for the increase. Whilst all complainants are still encouraged to submit complaints in writing this is no longer a requirement to ensure the process is fully accessible to everyone.
- We are also further reviewing the customer website to ensure that it is as easy as possible for customers to submit their feedback.

Table 2: Complaints made to the [Authority](#)

Year	Founded/partially founded	Unfounded	Totals*
2023/24	38	21	59*
2022/23	23	21	44*
2021/22	11	13	24*

\*In 2023/24 a further 7 complaints were withdrawn. In 2022/23 15 complaints were withdrawn, and in 2021/22 6 complaints were withdrawn. Withdrawn complaints are not counted in the totals above.

- All complainants are made aware of the appeals process and three appeals were received during 2023/24. All of these were unfounded, with the original outcomes upheld.



# Other Customer Feedback

## Home Fire Safety Visits

- Customers receiving a Safe and Well or Home Fire Safety visit are asked for feedback on the services they received.
- This feedback is discussed regularly with the Team Leaders within the Safe and Well Team to support continuous improvement.



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# Home Fire Safety Visits

The information within Tables 3, 4 and 5 shows an incredibly high level of satisfaction and is an improvement on last year's results.

Table 3: Overall, how happy are you with the service you received?

Overall satisfaction	Very Happy	Happy	Other
2023/24	961 (96%)	36 (4%)	5 (0%)
2022/23	1117 (94.9%)	56 (4.8%)	4 (0.3%)

Table 5: How likely is it that you would recommend Kent Fire and Rescue Service to a friend or colleague? (Net Promoter Score<sup>1</sup>)

NPS	Detractors	Passives	Promoters	NPS score
2023/2024	9	27	966	96
2022/23	0	38	1133	97

Table 4: Do you feel safer as a result of the home visit?

Feeling safer	Yes	No or unsure
2023/24	971 (97%)	31 (3%)
2022/23	1147 (97.4%)	30 (2.5%)



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# Following an incident

- Customers involved in an incident that Kent Fire and Rescue Service has attended are asked for feedback on the service they have received.
- The information received is discussed regularly with the Professional Standards Team as well as operational response colleagues and is used to support continuous improvement.
- A summary of the main findings is included in Tables 6,7,8 and 9 on the next slide which shows a high level of satisfaction. There are no comparable figures for the previous year as volumes of responses were deemed too low.



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**Table 6: Overall, how happy are you with the service you received?**

Overall satisfaction	Very Happy	Happy	Other
2023/24	24 (85.71%)	3 (10.71%)	1 (3.57%)

**Table 8: Do you feel that Kent Fire and Rescue Service kept the effects of the incident to a minimum?**

Effects of Incident	Yes	Don't Know
2023/2024	22 (91.67%)	2 (8.33%)

**Table 7: In your opinion, did Kent Fire and Rescue Service arrive?**

Quicker than I expected	As quickly as I expected	I had no expectations	I don't know how quickly they arrived
12 (56%)	6 (24%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)

**Table 9: How likely is it that you would recommend Kent Fire and Rescue Service to a friend or colleague? (Net Promoter Score<sup>2</sup>)**

NPS	Detractors	Passives	Promoters	NPS score
2023/2024	1 (4%)*	0 (0%)	26 (96%)	93

\*Detractor associated with a known vexatious complainant.



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# C2 E. Freedom of Information update

July 2024

For further information please contact:  
Owain Thompson, Head of Policy



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# Freedom of Information update

\*Q1 is currently incomplete as it covers the period from 01/04/2024 to 16/06/2024.

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

	2024/25				
	Q1*	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
The number of requests received during the period	34				
The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed	4				
The number of the received requests that were processed in full	30				
The number of requests where the information was granted in full	19				
The number of requests where the information was refused in full	3				
The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part	8				
The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review	2				
Number of data subject access requests**	3				



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# Freedom of Information end of year update 2023/24

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

	2023/24				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
The number of requests received during the period	45	40	25	46	156
The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed	0	0	0	0	0
The number of the received requests that were processed in full	45	40	25	46	156
The number of requests where the information was granted in full	30	26	18	31	105
The number of requests where the information was refused in full	3	5	0	1	9
The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part	12	9	7	14	42
The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review	1	1	0	2	4
Number of data subject access requests**	4	4	3	4	15



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# C2 F. Pensions and Pension Board update

July 2024

For further information please contact:  
Mark Rist, Director - Response and Resilience



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- In accordance with Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the Authority established a Pension Board for Firefighters' Pension Schemes.
- Board comprises representatives of both the employer and employees.
- To ensure Members are kept informed, and provide assurance of compliance with the Act, minutes of the Pension Board meetings are routinely reported to the Authority.
- The last Pension Board meeting due to be held in May 2024 had to be rescheduled due to other commitments. This meeting is now taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> June and will be after the print deadline for the Authority papers. Members will therefore be provided with a more detailed update at the Authority meeting in October.
- Matthews Update - 1,300+ letters sent out (between Dec 23 and April 24)
  - 507 Expression of Interest forms now returned (at 14 June)
  - 111 Statements sent out to eligible members (at 14 June)
  - To send:- 69 Jun, 73 Jul, 54 Aug, 135 Sep, 45 Oct, 20 Nov



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